

Virgo Praedicanda

THIS VISION ENCOURAGES ME AND MAKES ME HOPE
FOR GREAT SUCCESS, THAT IS TO SAY, FOR A MIGHTY
LEGION OF BRAVE AND VALIANT SOLDIERS OF JESUS AND
MARY, OF BOTH SEXES, TO FIGHT THE DEVIL,
THE WORLD, AND CORRUPT NATURE IN THOSE MORE
THAN EVER PERILOUS TIMES THAT ARE TO COME!



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LEGION OF MARY
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Cover image is designed by Gerald O'Byrne. D. March 1964. A well-known legionary artist whose distinctive work has on many occasions adorned our publications. The cover illustrates St. Louis-Marie de Montfort in Acies time, penning his celebrated prophecy which some believe to have been realised in the Legion of Mary.

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Archangel Raphael

All ye heavenly powers, Mary's Legion of Angels, pray for us. I talk to you about one of them: the Archangel Raphael.

The Book of Tobias is one of the short books of the Old Testament. It sets out as entertaining, touching and elevating a tale as could be imagined. It lifts the curtain on God's ways with us and has most valuable doctrinal lessons. The book contains the life story of the Tobias' family, father and son, and of their wives.

Tobias the elder was of the Tribe of Naphtali which belonged to the upper part of Galilee. Even as a boy he displayed extraordinary maturity of mind, such that the scripture says that he never did anything childish. He fled from the worship of the golden calves which at that time prevailed in Israel. Although not yet a man by the Old Law, he went regularly to the Temple in Jerusalem and fulfilled all the ritual there, while his deeds of charity were such as to be recorded in the Bible.

Reaching maturity, he married Anna of his own tribe, and the boy, called Tobias after him, was born. Carefully

tutored by his parents, this boy reflected their goodness and from his very infancy abstained from sin.

Then came one of the dreadful misfortunes which were permitted to descend upon the Jewish people when they had erred gravely from the law of God. The Assyrians, under King Shalmanseer, conquered them and transported either the whole people or a great section of them to Assyria. The Tobias family was stationed in Nineveh, the capital, one of the magnificent cities of antiquity. In those distressing conditions the family followed out all the religious rules, keeping themselves undefiled by the heathen ways or food. The uprightness of Tobias attracted the notice of the king who bestowed favour on him and permitted him to move about as he willed. Tobias used his opportunities to engage in trading and in this way he accumulated a fortune.

He put his freedom of movement and his money to most admirable use. He travelled widely to all his fellow victims of the captivity, helping them in their material wants and successfully encouraging them in the faithful following of their religion. The suggestion here is plain: that he alone was engaged in this apostolate – so necessary because of the inevitability that otherwise the captives would gradually be absorbed in the surrounding paganism.

One of his deeds at that time was destined to have a future immense consequence. In Rages, he met Gabelus, one of the captive Jews who were in great poverty. Having with him the large sum of ten talents of silver, he lent it to him.

One of his universal acts of goodness consisted in the burying of the dead Jews. The former king was dead and had been succeeded by his son, Sennacherib, a cruel monarch and a hater of the Jews. His venom in that

direction had been increased by the fact that he had been defeated in Judea and driven out. One of his vengeancees was to let anybody who liked slaughter the captive Jews, so that it was a common occurrence to find one of them lying dead in the streets, and unburied; because it was an offence to bury them. The extreme love of Tobias for his people led him to defy this order. Discovering a corpse, he would wait until he thought he was unobserved and then carry it to his own home. At night he would perform the burial. The legal penalty for this disobedience was death, and his family and friends entreated him not to run the risk. But to their terror he persisted. However, one day he was discovered and the fact reported to the king, who ordered him to be executed. Hearing this in time, Tobias fled with his wife and child. He was concealed by some of the other captives for all loved him. He lay hidden for forty five days. The king was killed by his own sons and was succeeded by Esarhaddon, who permitted Tobias to return. But apparently all his goods had been confiscated, and henceforth life was a struggle for the family.

Apparently the injustices to the Jews and the killing of them persisted, because Tobias resumed his former practice of burying them. His friends vainly pleaded with him, pointing out that he had escaped death once and could not expect a second chance.

One day, exhausted by this work of mercy, he lay down outside the wall of his house and went asleep.

Dung fell from a swallow's nest into his eyes and blinded him. He was then 56 years of age. This affliction brought his burying to a conclusion and probably saved his life.

His patience in bearing his trials of blindness and poverty was such as to put him on a level with Job. Like the latter, he suffered much from the tongues of his friends. The last

straw was when his wife, in a hasty moment, upbraided him: 'where now are your alms and your righteous deeds!' This exclamation was but a thoughtless one, forced out of her by affection. Let it be remembered that she was supporting the disabled man by the labour of her hands. But her words pierced his heart and hurt him so much that he prayed either to be relieved from his suffering or to be taken to Heaven. That anguished prayer of his was heard and in an extraordinary way. But before I tell it, I have to switch the story over to that city of Rages which I have already mentioned.

At the same moment that Tobias uttered his cry of anguish, a maiden called Sara, the daughter of Raguel, likewise cried out to God in agony. Her prayer was the same: that she be either relieved from her terrible position or permitted to die. The circumstances were that she had been betrothed to seven men in succession and each of these had been killed by the devil Asmodeus just before the consummation of the marriage. Although she was the holiest and most estimable of women, she incurred intolerable suspicion as to being responsible for their deaths. One day a maid, whom she had reprimanded, openly accused her of being a murderess who had killed those seven men. That was the cause of her torment and of her prayer. Her petition, like that of Tobias' uttered at the same moment, was answered. Before I tell you how, let us return to the Tobias family at Nineveh.

Running acutely short of money, Tobias thought of asking for the repayment of that loan which he had made many years ago to Gabelus of Rages, which was not too distant from Ecbatana where Sara was living with her parents. In the meantime Gabelus had become wealthy. So Tobias instructed his son to go upon that errand to

the far off place where the debtor lived. The journey was perilous and especially so for a Jew. So the parents poured out their most fervent prayers that God would protect their beloved child who had in every way borne out his original promise. He had grown up into a young man of supreme excellence.

It was at that moment that God determined to act. The text describes it as follows (Tob 3:24): 'the prayers of both Tobias and Sara were heard in the sight of the glory of the Most High God. And the holy Angel of the Lord, Raphael, was sent to heal them both, whose prayers at the same time were rehearsed in the sight of the Lord.'

So young Tobias set out. Waiting outside his house he found Raphael in the appearance of a strong and handsome young man, who gave his name as Azarias. He offered to journey with Tobias, explaining that he knew the way well and that he had often stayed with Gabelus; that is the debtor in question. Overwhelmed by this coincidence, Tobias brought the stranger back to his parents who were reassured beyond all measure and commended their boy to him. He promised that he would bring Tobias back safe to them. Of course none of them had any inkling that Azarias was an angel.

After their departure, the mother had a great revulsion of feeling. Her fears overcame her and she lamented that they had let the boy go at all. She cried out that they should have been content to struggle along in their poverty rather than run the risk of losing him. But the father declared his faith that the boy was in the keeping of God and would return safe.

The first night the travellers lodged by the River Tigris. Going out in the morning to wash, a monstrous fish jumped from the water and made to devour young

Tobias. In terror he cried out to Azarias for help. But the angel answered calmly 'seize it by the gill and draw it out upon the land. Then take out the entrails and keep the heart and the gall and the liver, because these will provide important medicines for our future use'. These things Tobias did, the monster panting helpless in his hands.

The reference to a fish coming out upon the land to devour a man sounds puzzling. But there is a well-supported tradition which would seem to explain it, namely that the fish in question was really the Egyptian crocodile. Moreover, one might think that the Archangel was merely staging an impressive miracle and utilising items which presented themselves. Not so. He was revealing a power which those elements of the crocodile apparently possessed, that is to help in ailments like epilepsy and leucoma.

Coming to Rages, Tobias asked the angel where would they lodge and he replied that it would be in the house of Raguel, who proved to be a near kinsman of Tobias. The angel continued that he had a daughter, Sara, whom Tobias must take for a wife. But Tobias had heard the story of the seven husbands and was reluctant to become the eighth one. He explained this to the angel who reassured him and laid down a procedure by which the devil Asmodeus was to be defeated. Part of the ritual to be observed was the utilisation of the liver of the fish; it was to be burnt on the fire and the smoke would drive the devil away.

Then the angel and Tobias entered into the home of Raguel who received them with unutterable pleasure on learning that one of his visitors was the son of his well-beloved friend, the elder Tobias.

Later, Tobias sought Sara as his wife but her parents did not agree, fearing that he might suffer the same fate

as the other seven. Then Azarias won them over by a promise that all would turn out well. The marriage was arranged and took place. The ritual ordered by the angel was fulfilled; the devil was taken hold of by Raphael and confined to the desert of Upper Egypt.

It forms a somewhat quaint circumstance that Raguel, the father of the bride, was only half convinced by the word of Azarias. For on the evening of the nuptials he had a grave dug, ready to receive the body of Tobias if he became number eight. But all went off happily as the angel had declared, and the grave was filled in without an occupant.

In the meantime, Raphael had taken some servants of Raguel and two camels and had gone off to Gabelus the debtor. The latter was rejoiced to hear that the son of his old friend was about to be married and set out with Azarias to attend the ceremony. He gave to Raphael the amount of the debt.

The wedding of course delayed Tobias considerably. Those were not the days of expeditious means of communication, so the elder Tobias and his wife were reduced to a pitiful condition of suspense and grief. Finally, at the first possible moment, young Tobias set out. Sara's parents bestowed upon him half of their substance of all kinds, including servants, flocks and herds and money, and sent him away with the prayer that the holy angel would be with their children along every mile of the journey. This prayer was being honoured in a manner more substantial than they dreamt. Azarias and Tobias set out for Nineveh.

During her son's absence, Anna had sat on the top of a hill for a portion of each day, whence she hoped to see him return. Now indeed that happy day was come. She

saw him in the distance and forthwith ran to her husband crying, 'Behold thy son cometh'.

Before they entered in, Azarias said to Tobias: 'Immediately after you had adored God and given thanks to him for your safety, go to your father and kiss him, then at once anoint his eyes with this gall of the fish which you have carried with you. Be assured that his eyes will be opened.'

After the indescribable rejoicings of the first moments, Tobias took the gall and anointed his father's eyes. Within half an hour his father recovered his sight. His first thought was to cry: 'I bless thee, O Lord God of Israel, because thou hast chastised me: and now thou hast saved me, and behold I see Tobias my son.'

In the succeeding days Tobias junior told of his adventures and of all that Azarias had done for him. His father was overwhelmed and they debated between them how they could express their gratitude. So they brought Azarias in and spoke to him their gratitude for such services which could never be repaid. They besought him as a small offering to accept half of all their new possessions. Also they petitioned him to make his abode with them. Then followed the astounding revelation of which they had no previous notion. He disclosed that he was Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand before the Lord. He told them that God had noted every noble deed which the father had performed. Likewise he had heard the agonised pleadings of Sara and her parents over the trial of the seven husbands. So he had commissioned Raphael to go first to Nineveh to escort young Tobias to Rages, and then to rectify the sorrows of the other family by relieving them from the devil and bringing about the marriage. Then he, Raphael, by the

instruction of God, had returned to heal the blindness of Tobias.

When he had spoken these things, Raphael was taken from their sight and they saw him never more on earth. They lay prostrate for three hours upon their faces, blessing God.

The rest of the days of the family were spent in unmixed happiness. After the restoration of his sight, Tobias lived 42 years; that is to 102 years of age. He saw the children of his grandchildren, and then he died and was buried honourably in Nineveh. After his death his son went to live in Rages. Sometime after that, Nineveh was destroyed by the Medes.

The chief lesson of this story is the light it casts upon the ministration of the angels. Among them St Raphael has always been credited with an important place in the office of healing. His name means he who heals. It is not to be thought that this reputation attaches to him merely by reason of the part he played in the episode of Tobias. From time immemorial that power had been attributed to him. In one of the more ancient Jewish writings, it is narrated that Raphael was commissioned by God to put down the evil spirits which vexed the sons of Noah with the plagues and sicknesses after the Flood. It was Raphael, according to that tradition, who taught man the use of herbs and minerals and other substances for the healing of ailments. It is even alleged that the Apocryphal Book, the Book of Noah, contained the first treatise on medicines, and that all this material was furnished by the Archangel Raphael.

The fact that those early writings have not been received as authentic scripture need not deprive them of all value. Such books often hand down to us correct

history and tradition. In any case they represent the ideas of the people of the time and may thus possess utility. Though not accepted scripture, they can be read as admirable spiritual reading affording sidelights otherwise not available. In this case for instance, the Book of Noah professes to tell us about that more than interesting time, that of the original great calamity of mankind, the Flood.

The suggestions that the archangel was used to enlighten the earliest men in regard to availing of the natural things around them for curative purposes is intriguing. For how else did those primitive men at once turn to the natural things around them and put them to medical purposes. They had not our modern aids towards analysis and experiment. So the fact that from the first they seemed to be able, in a rather expert manner, to attend to the physical evils suggests that a higher power was at work to illuminate their first steps.

Moreover, from the earliest times religion and healing were associated. There was a link between the priests and that science in every one of the ancient religions. We see this carried on into Christianity too. The monasteries provided the first dispensaries. In each one, several monks were set aside for that office. They delved into that science and provided medicines. This tendency would fit in with that most ancient idea about St Raphael being the instructor in that science.

It is one of our terrible mistakes to think that mankind was utterly deprived and benighted in all those respects before the days of our modern science. Much evidence exists to the contrary. May this impressive story of the Tobias father and son, cause you to think more in terms of the angels, whom the Legion of Mary calls the Heavenly Legion of Mary. We are told that we are to regard their

warfare as paralleling ours, each necessary to the other. They supply the immense power and we supplement them in the capacity of instruments.

Also, for the future give greater thought to St Raphael.

What Shall a Man Give for a Soul

It is indescribably joyful to see that the *Peregrinatio Pro Christo* has entered on a new stage. It has begun to grow in a higher sense than that of mere size. Many other places, having received it, are now sending out their own sparks which in turn will start fires. This suggests the rate of increase called 'geometric'; after a while this multiplies itself to inconceivable proportions. To bring home to you the possibilities of it, I give you the story of the eastern emperor who, wishing to remunerate his doctor for a cure, asked him to name his own fee. The doctor pointed to a chessboard which lay before the monarch and said: 'One grain of wheat for the first square, two for the second, four for the third, and so on.' The emperor laughed at the inadequacy of this reward until his mathematicians worked it out. Then it was discovered that his realm could not afford the transaction!

That rate of growth is necessary to the Catholic apostolate. I have mentioned mathematics in connection

with the chessboard. Now let us apply that science to the chessboard of the world. It tells us that if Catholicism as a proportion of the world population continues to diminish at the rate which has prevailed in recent centuries, we will have descended to five per cent by the end of this century. In human affairs this would point to approaching extinction. That cannot be – we are assured by the divine promise. But none the less it is an intolerable contemplation, for it is the opposite to the Catholic programme as delivered to us by the same divine lips. That programme was one of universal conquest, a going out to all men to deliver the Christian message and presumably to convert very great numbers of them. But to sink to five per cent would almost seem to deprive us of the right to call ourselves ‘Catholic’ which means universal. Therefore a most determined mobilising of the Church must be set in motion. The Peregrinatio has already shown itself to be a worthy part of that mobilisation.

It is not alone the pagan territories which need attention. Even in the Church itself many lead lives of the poorest quality. It would be conservative to say that half the practising Catholics only half-believe. The Peregrinatio must seek to breathe into those poor spiritless ones its own vehement conviction.

What shall a man give for a soul? Once St Francis Xavier answered this by the outburst: ‘To travel the whole world over, to suffer everything and at the end of it all to have won a soul – oh, what a triumph!’ The Peregrinatio would echo that magnificent cry. It too, has felt that urge for souls and has been stirred to travel for them. Soon it will have taken on gigantic proportions. Here must enter in a word of warning. Size is only secondary. Quality is primary and it must be studied all the time. Every beginning has a

touch of quality in it. A first venturing into the unknown may represent heroic faith and courage. But after that it is no longer at the same height, and it may be nothing more than respectable performance. Therefore faith must always be kept at some degree of strain. In other words there must be progressive adventuring. Progressive towards what?

Well, the campaign, both in faith and in dimension, must bear a proper proportion to the task as stated by Our Lord: 'Speak to every creature.' The estimated population of the world is three thousand million. By the end of this century it will have doubled. Present outlook and methods will have to be infinitely improved on if effective approach is to be made to that multitude. Such being the colossal programme towards which you are planning, I must speak to you in words befitting your spirit. Nothing less must be proposed to you than the very noblest examples which the Church has been producing during the ages. Then you must be urged to go forth and do likewise. But at the same time I tremble lest you take me at my word and proceed to do those very things.

What – you may cry – are you really saying that the headlines afforded by the saints are only ornamental and not to be seriously presented for fear that people follow them?

This blunt objection puts me on the sharp horns of a dilemma. One horn is represented by the command of Our Lord that all men be approached, and by the efforts of the saints to obey him. The other horn is that a cautious philosophy towards souls dominates us today. Its key-note is safety. Its adjective is 'prudent'. Its language is a sort of double-talk, almost amounting to this: 'Go forth on bold adventure provided you are sure it cannot fail. Be heroic

up to the point where danger threatens. Manifest a blind faith but keep your eyes wide open lest you edge off the beaten path.'

But the foregoing is a study in contradictions! Yes it is ridiculous. It is a subordinating of the divine operations to the rules of human prudence. But it is the outlook of the day. And that is why the Legion is nearly afraid to talk to you in terms of the grand enthusiasm of the saints. If anything unfortunate were to happen to one of you on the Peregrinatio, there would be a denunciation of Legion recklessness. But that outcry would in reality be directed against the authentic Christian standards as manifested in every page of the story of the Church.

So I speak to you according to the formula proposed by Leo XIII which you will find quoted in the handbook: You will avoid worldly prudence and you will avoid mere recklessness. Faith, love of Mary, and obedience will be your watchwords. They will carry you afar, as they have already brought you far. Some of the things which today you are doing would seven years ago have been regarded as wild recklessness, but they have been demonstrated to be practicable and easy. You have not yet got a martyr!

The thought which rises up in my mind about you is this: What would St Francis Xavier think of you if he could have cast his vision forward to your time? I assure you that the sight would have been a shock to him, a pleasant one, because you represent something unthought-of in his day; that is the entry of the ordinary people into the direct working for souls. The saint had bitter need for such helpers, but they were not available. If he had this help he could have multiplied his field of action a thousand fold. If this had happened, the history of Asia would be different.

I have been mentioning St Francis and now I am going to propose him to you as a model for your work. He was a worthy successor to those Monks of the West, as Montalembert calls them, who traversed the Continent of Europe on their great adventure, the *Peregrinatio Pro Christo*, from which you have taken your name. That was at the time when the Roman Empire had collapsed and barbarism had taken its place; when Christianity was, in the words of Pius XI, a lost cause humanly speaking. Like the Magi of old, those monks had a vision and they pursued it. They cut a path through every obstacle, and they rebuilt the Christian faith.

Of that same mould was Francis Xavier who 800 years later went travelling in like manner for Christ. He was born in 1506 in Spanish Navarre. His language was Basque which still survives: in his last delirium he babbled away in that tongue. In 1525 he went to the University of Paris where he remained for 11 years, obtaining his master's degree and doing some teaching. At that time the university had 44,000 students in fifty colleges. They came from many nations: Latin was the common language. Among his contemporaries there were the Presbyterians, Calvin and Buchanan. The Reformation had dawned and was soon to rise fully. St Francis encountered them and talked with them. But his fire was still choked under the ashes in him.

The generality of his biographers paint Francis as a man of soaring worldly ambitions and working hard towards realising them. But one modern biography depicts him as more or less putting in time there and with no particular programme for the future. Contrast that position and the potential which was in him. Francis was a reserved individual, whose manner did not exactly invite approach.

More or less lost in the crowd, there was nothing in his behaviour to cause those around him to discern the mighty force that lay in him. So no one devoted themselves to him until St Ignatius did. St Ignatius saw and finally made the conquest. St Francis was totally won to the cause of Christ.

Although the details of a life so great would be stimulating, I must skip through the years. In 1534 the preliminary vows were taken by the first group of Jesuits at Montmartre. Peter Favre was the only priest among them; he said the Mass. Ignatius and Francis were ordained priests on 24 June 1537, as subsequently after wondrous deeds they was canonised together. Europe was a whirlpool at the time, faith and conduct having suffered serious collapse. The Reformers were feverishly at work, successfully exploiting the situation.

That little band threw themselves into the thick of that mess. When one thinks it out, it must have been very much akin to what you have been meeting in the Peregrinatio, except that in the people of that time there would have been more faith and more misery.

Leaving themselves open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they sought every opportunity of talking to souls about God and the Church, and they performed services for those souls in order to prove their love for them. They joyfully submitted to the terrible hardships, sufferings, frustrations which such wanderings then entailed. Today it would be hard to find parallel for their privations. Those were days of fever unchecked, poverty unrelieved and every sort of misfortune running riot among the people.

Wherever St Francis was he would, immediately after Mass, set off to move among the people, talking to them, teaching, hearing their Confessions – all day long if needs

be, catechising children and grown-ups. It was certainly true that he gave every breath most perfectly to God. It was in the midst of these labours that the tremendous call to his life's work came.

The King of Portugal applied to St Ignatius for missionaries for India. Two were commissioned, but fate intervened; neither was able to go. It was a case resembling that of St Patrick who was passed over in favour of Palladius. In the latter case St Patrick was eventually sent; in the former case, St Francis.

St Francis was appointed in 1540. As the King of Portugal required that the missionaries going to India should set off from Lisbon, Francis had to proceed there from Rome, a journey of 2,000 miles done on horseback. Then followed the prolonged, perilous sea voyage. Oh, when one reads the details of that ghastly journey of his to the East, one feels the contrast with your luxurious boat journeys, and the still more luxurious air flights. Not that this diminishes your gift; you use the means which are provided for you, and you cannot lose a minute of your limited time. But nevertheless, think of what he had to do.

There were 1,000 people on that ship, a little craft without sanitation, which nowadays would not be licensed for a fraction of that number. A painful ordeal for a delicately constituted person would be the inescapable stench to which everything contributed, especially the amount of sickness. Some of this was sea sickness, but fever and other ailments were also rife. To cope with this situation there would very often be no physician on board. Here again St Francis was at the beck and call of everyone, teaching consoling, rendering every sort of service which the individual case seemed to need. His impact on all was prodigious. Such were his manner of

life and his humble approach as to leave no loophole for ascribing improper motives to him. He was undeniably holy, loving God, representing God, giving God. That was all. Everyone listened and was moved.

At length that nightmare journey of over a year came to an end. His real mission began. It was at Goa. That territory presented the earliest colonising field. The Portuguese and the Spaniards were the first openers up of the undiscovered world. Conquest, commerce, colonisation followed automatically. There is one thing that has to be recorded in favour of those particular nations. Though their conquests were attended by dark deeds and ineradicable stains, nevertheless through the whole picture ran a true faith, a belief in the Church, and a genuine desire to give that treasure to the people. Many of their administrators touched the very summits of moral grandeur. Therein they stood out among the other colonising nations. St Francis benefited by that.

He began his enterprise with the ardour which he had already shown. Ever after he continued at a pressure which would seem to be humanly impossible, never letting down. Look at him: his form and face gaunt, his garments threadbare, his luggage miserable – no more in fact than Mass equipment and an umbrella, the latter to give him some shielding from the heavy rain and the merciless sun. It is told that he carried with him a little square of leather to sole his boots. He used to walk barefoot a great deal, but sometimes the conditions of heat and surface were such as to make this impossible. Due to the extreme heat and the consequent discomfort and to the unrelieved operations of vermin, mosquitoes, ants and insects of every description, St Francis can be said to have passed his life in the circumstances of the fourth plague of Egypt.

He never gave himself any proper rest. He was usually heard praying away at night when all others had retired. He would lie down for an hour or two to give himself some sleep; then up again to resume that superhuman existence. He was consumed with the love of God; it drove him on and put him at the disposal of every person.

He went to Cape Comorin in 1542, to Malacca in 1545, to Ceylon in 1548, and to Cochin at the end of that same year. In all of these places, according to unimpeachable testimony, he worked miracles to attest his preaching. In one place a dreadful pestilence ceased on the very day that he entered there. He raised a number of people from the dead; his process of canonisation specifies four of them. He had a strange facility for mastering enough of the language of each place to enable him to carry on his work. It has always been considered that this represented the gift of tongues. One of his biographers attributes it to a prodigious memory and capacity. This explanation would not satisfy most of us.

Francis knew the names of people whom he had never met, and he greeted them by name. Repeatedly he requested prayers for persons whom he declared had just died, and this was proved later. An astounding episode is minutely testified to. One time when he was journeying on a boat, a crucifix to which he attached great value, slipped off his dress and sank into the deep. The following day a crab crawled out at the edge of the water, bearing in its claw the lost crucifix. It waited until somebody relieved it of its burden; then it retreated into its watery abode. Do not be led by the modern disrespect of the miraculous to laugh at those prodigies. The marvellous is an integral part of the Christian faith, especially to be expected when there is question of giving testimony to the truth of the Faith.

In each place where he was, he worked with a passionate sense of urgency. He really can be said to have hungered for souls. It is related that as he covered, sometimes running in his ardour, the distance from place to place he used to talk with the Mother of Souls about their need and beg her intercession on their behalf. Their necessities were acutely present to his mind and he was always full of the desire to move on to a new place. But this was his great pain. He could not leave those whom he had evangelised without the care of a priest, so he was always writing home pleading for others to come out to help him. He declared that he would love to make a tour of the universities of Europe to turn their thoughts in the direction of the need for priests in the Far East. He regarded it as a triumph to receive one priest and it was joy beyond measure if he got two or three. He would instruct them as to his methods and start them off in his own way of operating. Then he would feel able to move off to another place. His thoughts were winged. They flew to the limits of the territories which recent discoveries had made known and they went even beyond that out into the absolute unknown.

In 1548 he met a Japanese, Angeroo, who enkindled in the saint a great desire to go to Japan. He went there in 1549 and remained for something over two years. He then returned to India but subsequently made another visit to Japan, this time with the ultimate idea of entering China.

In Japan his work led on to the making of immense numbers of conversions. Then he proceeded to try to realise the final chapter of his ambition. China was then a land of mystery and imagination, a country of teeming millions, with its own peculiar civilisation. It was urgent to him that he now go there, for it was evident that the sands of life were running out for him. He was only forty-

five, but already he was a worn out old man. How he went on, nobody knew. He landed on the coast of China. That landing was illegal. The Emperor had recently prohibited the entry of the Portuguese who had discovered the country and were now beginning to come in fair numbers.

So, St Francis was quickly apprehended and expelled. He did not go far. He landed on a small island off the coast from which the mainland was plainly visible. There he waited, racked with fever, tortured by ague, sick in every limb and organ of his body. But dauntlessly he sought the opportunity of slipping over again. No doubt he was eager to have his exhausted life finally extinguished by force. For that was something he often spoke about: How people should aspire to martyrdom – the glory of laying down their lives for Jesus and the good and sweet and all-powerful Mother of Jesus. That was his great longing. But on that little island of Sancian [now Shangchuan] he died. That I suppose is a typical picture of all life: to die with one's ambitions unrealised; to die a failure in one's own eyes; to die like one's Master, a public failure! But was there failure in that? Was there failure in anything he did? It would be impossible to say that there was.

Even that disappointment of China has the divine hallmark upon it. It is a striking fact that on the day he breathed forth his life a child was born in Italy who was destined to take up his work where he had laid it down. That is to enter China and to begin the evangelisation of it. That was Fr Mathew Ricci. Looking down with love on his servant Francis, whom he was taking to himself, God ratified his mission, approved his ambition and provided for the succession.

Certain items of his outlook have provoked criticism. They do not tally with modern ideas. He was a person

who baptised without too much inquiry. He had an extraordinary gift for moving people. When they came into his presence they sensed holiness, and the sincerity and the love that poured out of his eyes. People were willing to listen to him and to be convinced by him. He would come among a people; teach them the rudiments of religion; get the prayers into their own language; and then he would baptise them. Often he would then have to move off and leave them. One school of thought would say that he should not have spoken to those people at all; that unless it is quite certain that one's work is going to be followed up, it should not be undertaken. In other words, the gospel is to be reduced to the exclusive level of human planning.

But baptism is more than a ceremony by which we make one a child of God. It is also the adoption of a soul by God as his child and therefore it confers a right to his parental care.

We may be sure that St Francis had his measuring lines mapped out for himself. He knew what he was doing, and he did it; and observe the way in which things worked out. He went to the Island of Mannar off the coast of India and he converted the entire population. After working there for a comparatively short time he baptised all the people. Then he had to depart. But the fact remains that within a few more months 700 of those people laid down their lives in martyrdom for the Faith which had been so hurriedly communicated to them.

The same could be said on a grander scale of the conversions which were made in Japan. After some years the government of that country became alarmed at the up rise of the Christian faith. They passed a law against it and death was prescribed as the penalty for refusing to

relinquish Christianity. It was impossible to interrogate such numbers. So the government chose a rough and ready method for establishing a person's status. They cordoned around each place and ordered all to leave it for a time by certain exits. At each exit they put a cast-iron plate bearing a great crucifix, so that to leave one had to trample on the crucifix. That did not trouble the pagans, of course, and sorrowful to say it did not trouble the European Protestant merchants who were now coming to Japan. Inside that enclosure were then left the Christians who were forthwith massacred.

A historical sequel illustrated the tenacity of those people. There was one Christian place which was not visited by death in that manner, due to its being shut in between hills. Its priest told them that one day another priest would come to them and renew the sacrifice. In the meantime they must loyally carry on. He appointed a Council of Elders whose duty it would be to administer baptism, to teach the catechism, to conduct services, in substitution for the Mass, to govern the community. For 300 years that faithful maintaining of the Christian usages persisted. Then once again Japan was opened to the missionaries. A traveller coming to this particular place and observing their church and way of behaviour, told them that not far distant was a church exactly like their own. The news produced excitement. The Council of Elders debated the announcement and a deputation of them set off at once to investigate. When they arrived they examined the church thoroughly. What they saw satisfied them. They sought out the missionary and told their strange tale. The result was that priests were sent to them and the fullness of the Catholic worship was restored. It represents one of the special tragedies of all history, an

affair like that of the Holy Innocents, that this place was the one obliterated by the atom bomb. It was Nagasaki!

St Francis had no doubt that salvation was a matter of the Catholic Church. It was necessary to die in the visible membership of the Church and in the very embrace of its sacraments. We are disconcerted to find him stating that certain people who had not died in those conditions had gone to hell. Today the Church would not allow him to go that far. It is to be hoped that many outside the visible fold of the Church will be saved. But that is something which lies in the hands of God and about which we know nothing.

We must be clear about one thing: Catholicism is the Church of Christ. Its teaching and its saving power are unique. It would be a gross impiety to make such allowances for other religions as would depreciate the value of baptism, the Eucharist, the Mass, Our Lady, etc. Or which would suggest that it is unnecessary for men to subject themselves to a revealed code of belief and conduct.

Your own idealism and exertions depend on your regarding the Church as thus offering treasures not otherwise available. If people are all right in their nebulous faiths, believing what they will and doing what they like, it would be a folly for you to tread hard ways. And it would be madness to burn yourselves up or squeeze out your life by slow torture as St Francis Xavier did.

So believe with all your heart that you cannot offer to anyone a greater benefit than the Holy Catholic Church. This was the conviction which drove St Francis relentlessly on. Towards that end he lived his wondrous life in which he brought to pass that exclamation of which I gave you at the beginning: He journeyed over the world. He suffered

everything under the sun to gain souls for Christ. In him you have an incomparable model for your work, a man whose very name stands for missionary endeavour.

He has been likened to St Paul and to St Jerome – to which names I must add St Columbanus, the special patron of the Peregrinatio.

Jesus and Mary in the Koran. Are They the Key to it?

Mohammedanism is a phenomenon which has had to be reckoned with in all the course of its history. Out of beginnings as humble as those of Christianity it rose up into greatness. For a considerable time it rivalled Christianity as a religious and ruling force. For a while it seemed as if it would overcome Christianity. But it suffered military defeat and was driven out of Christianity's special sphere of influence, Europe.

Now in Africa it is asserting itself strongly. In the North it holds political power and is completely in the ascendant. Elsewhere in that continent it extends rapidly. The common idea has been that it grows at twice the rate of Catholicism. But some have said that the rate is much greater. Whatever the right figure is, Mohammedanism is manifested as one of the acute problems of the world.

'Go preach the gospel to every creature,' said Our Lord. Mohammedanism is an immense section which has not

listened. Worse than that, it is contending successfully with the Church in a contest for the souls of the African peoples.

I have said that the origins of the two religions were equally humble. But there is a difference which is deep. Mohammedanism began absolutely with Mahomet, whereas Jesus Christ was not merely the originator of the New Law of Christianity but was also the culmination of the Old Law of Judaism. Christ was a divine promise realised and a multitude of prophecies pointed forward to him. Christianity emerged from the soil when he taught it, but its roots went back to the beginning of God's relations with men; and those roots endorse Christ and his claims. These facts put the two religions on a completely different footing as philosophical propositions.

Now let us give an anxious and respectful consideration to that phenomenon of Mohammedanism. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Mahomet was indebted to the Jews for almost all the stories and much of the law of the Koran. But he did not draw the essence of his doctrine from the Jews, nor directly from the Christians. In the Syro-Babylonian desert many Christian hermits had lived. From these a certain knowledge of Christianity had penetrated through the territory. This knowledge was the germ of Islam.

Mahomet was born about the year 570, near enough to the time when Christianity was wiped out in Persia. Let us give his story as he told it himself. In the month of Ramadan, he was engaged in prayer on Mount Hira. The Angel Gabriel appeared to him and showed him a silken scroll which he was enabled to read, although he was illiterate. It contained the first divine message and it constituted him a prophet. He returned home very

disturbed. After about two years the visions recurred. He accepted the commission of prophet and sought recruits. Persecution fell upon him and in 622 he fled from Mecca to Medina where he won support. He surrounded himself with twelve apostles and Islam began to spread. He became most influential. He devised the idea of the Arab Commonwealth which attracted men powerfully and he made the new religion the cement of that organisation. He created law and justice where violence and self-assertion had reigned. At first Islam was tolerant of other religions, but turned first against the Jews and later against the Christians.

Mohammedanism does not impose many burdensome rules upon its adherents. Its precepts are five in number: The Unity of God, fulfilment of the time of stated prayer, almsgiving, observance of the annual fast of Ramadan, the making of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

The characteristic of Islam has been to convert. This has not been our characteristic in regard to them, and herein our very Catholicity seems to be at stake. The amazing feature is seen in many places that the Moslems eagerly follow up certain Catholic devotions and press into Catholic shrines.

In what follows I try to present a mode of approach to them based more particularly on Our Blessed Lady, whose position in Islam is considerable and extraordinary. She does seem to represent common ground capable of fruitful development both in the orders of grace and psychology.

The best brief study of which I know on this subject is the article in the *Review Maria* by Fr Adel-el-Jalil, OFM. He is a convert from Mohammedanism. He bases his researches on the Koran and on the recognised commentaries on the Koran which have great authority.

First, a word about the Koran. It occupies a unique position among Mohammedans for whom it is the literal word of God descended from Heaven. Their religion depends entirely upon it. What it tells is considered to be a direct communication from God to Mahomet through the angel. Mohammedans would not tolerate phrases like: 'Mahomet composed the Koran' or 'The Koran has borrowed from Judaism and Christianity'. For this reason what the Koran teaches about Jesus and Mary is of primary importance to us. The Mohammedans must believe that it is the very voice of God which is declaring those things.

As they stand, those teachings about Jesus and Mary are anomalous and mystifying. They are prominent, even sensational. But they are not of a piece with the rest of the Mohammedan system, and therefore seem to have no meaning. But surely it is a supreme matter for them *as Mohammedans* that they should try to fit into their religion what is, as much as any other part, the formal teaching of the Koran?

The Koran attaches the greatest importance to the Nativity and Infancy of Christ; and also to the Nativities of Our Lady and St John the Baptist. But the Koran is unable to bring together into a consistent whole all the items and aspects which it supplies about Our Lord - as if it could not really place him. The Koran does not recognise that he continued his life in a church. But of course neither do many Catholics sufficiently understand this. The Koran shows Jesus as a perpetual wanderer, barefoot, his night spent in devotions and his days in doing good and working miracles. The commentaries on the Koran (which, as said, have great authority) ascribe to him a multitude of prodigies, many resembling our canonical ones, others the apocryphal ones. In referring to these miracles, the Koran

specifies: 'with the permission of God' presumably with the intention of denying the divinity of Christ. Nevertheless, the contrast between Christ and Mahomet in this respect is striking: no miracles are credited to Mahomet.

The Mohammedans attach Christ to Adam through Noah, Abraham, David (K 3:32). But they are scandalised by the 'queer folk' presented in the Christian genealogies of Our Lord. So the Koran removes him from the common line of generation and places him in Mary at the right moment. This is so extraordinary a procedure as to make one wonder if they are not thereby attaching to him some element of the divine – contrary to their ordinary professions. Some of the Mohammedan authorities say that Jesus was the first being to be created, and after him, Mahomet.

They do not believe that he died on the cross or normally. His death was only a semblance! Death and all suffering were spared to him who was the envoy of God! Here again there is anomaly. The Koran declares him to be a prophet of God, but for what purpose and what is his message? The Koran sets him in a gigantic dimension, but nevertheless he does not seem to have anything that can be called a role in the Mohammedan religion.

Mary too, holds a notable place in Islam. The Koran talks much about her. The commentaries have posed many problems regarding her. The popular mind enthuses over her and pursues her even into the Christian churches. As in the case of Christ, the information given about her draws largely on the Apocrypha as well as on the Canon. The Koran names her father as 'Imrane,' but one historian puts 'Joachim'. The Koran refers to her mother as 'the spouse of Imrane,' but Mohammedans grant her the name of 'Anne'.

The Koran gives Anne prominence. The story of her sterility is told; her prayer was heard and she conceived Mary. Then she addressed God: 'Lord, I vow to thee what is in my womb: it is consecrated to thee; accept it from me' (K 3:32). 'Then when Anne had given birth, she said: "Lord, it is a girl that I have brought forth." And God knew full well what she had brought forth' (K 3:33). But she had expected a son, presumably thinking it was the Messiah!

The Koran then sets on the lips of Anne this momentous utterance: 'I place her and also her seed under thy protection against Satan the accursed one.' Here plainly is a reference to the prophecy of Genesis regarding the woman and her seed who would redeem the human race from the thralldom of Satan.

Moreover, Mohammedan tradition proclaims with unanimity the privilege of the Immaculate Conception: 'Every child of Adam is touched by Satan at the moment of birth except the Son of Mary and his mother.' This holds the maximum authority and has always been defended by correct Mohammedanism. All insist that Mary was preserved from every stain. It may be objected that the foregoing, referring to birth, does not amount to a teaching of the Immaculate Conception. Not so; for according to the Mohammedan idea it is at birth that Satan grasps the soul, and so their contention is that Mary was conceived and born free from original sin.

Likewise, Mohammedanism attributes to Mary unshakable faith and absolute obedience, being thus made ready for the pouring into her of the Holy Spirit.

Anne is shown as saying: 'I have given her a name: it is Maryam.' The Moslem commentators discuss the meaning of that name just as we would. Some of their

suggestions are: 'the holy one,' 'the servant,' 'the devoted one'. The Koran says: 'Her Lord welcomed her with a delightful welcome and made her grow with a delightful growth' (K 3:34).

Mary is believed to have the use of reason and of speech at a very early time. Most say that she was brought to the Temple at the age of three, where she was in the charge of her relative, Zachary (K 3:37). The Koran does not offer exact information as to her occupations in the Temple, but tradition assigns to her household tasks; embroidery and prayer.

There is an astounding phrase in the Koran: 'O Mary, be devout to thy Lord. Prostrate yourself along with those who bow in prayer' (K 3:42). What is this? Mary prostrates herself with all – apparently as a supplement to their prayers! This has all the air of a pointing to her mediation.

Whenever she went to draw water, the angels presented themselves to her, going and coming, saying: 'Mary, God has picked thee and purified thee and has chosen thee above all the women of the world' (K 3:41).

The Annunciation is told in Chapter XIX 15-21 of the Koran: 'We sent to her our Spirit who appeared to her under the form of a perfect man. She said: I take refuge with God from you. He said: I am but the messenger of thy Lord to give thee a pure son. She said: How can I have a son, for no man has touched me. I am virtuous. He said: Thus has God spoken. So she conceived.' This description follows precisely the sense of the Gospel. The angel is Gabriel to whom Islam assigns an outstanding role in the religious history of mankind.

The nativity is declared by the Koran to have taken place at the foot of a palm tree. After it her people came to her and reproached her with having brought forth a child in sin,

disgracing the family. She indicated that they should speak to the babe. 'They said: How are we to speak to that newborn child? But the child said: I am the servant of the Lord. He has given me the Book and made me a prophet. He has made me blessed whenever I am. Peace is upon me the day of my birth, of my death, and of my rising from the dead' (K 19:26-32). Let it be mentioned that the word 'peace' possesses the strongest significance with the Mohammedans, being roughly equivalent to 'grace and blessing'.

The text 19:33-34 of the Koran has strange words: 'It is Jesus, Son of Mary, whom they are discussing. It could not be possible that God would have a son. Praise be to him. When he has decreed a thing, he says: Let it be, and it is.' No more significant passage than that occurs in the Koran and we must dissect it. Mohammedanism denies divinity to Christ, and yet this text appears to concede it. For it speaks of God having a son and then admits that with God nothing is impossible. He has but to say the word and it is done! The text makes it plain that nothing else but a true son – and therefore divine – is in question.

Another verse of the Koran (66:12) states: 'Into her who has preserved her virginity we will breathe our Spirit.' The Koran vehemently defends the reputation of Mary, removing from her every doubt and insisting that one of the principal reasons for the reprobation of the Jews lay in their attitude towards her (4-155).

Satan did not know the time of the birth of Jesus. His suspicions were aroused by the later miracles, the falling of idols, etc. Then Satan attacked but Jesus was protected by millions of angels.

The commentaries put into Elizabeth's mouth: 'I feel him who is in my womb bow down before him who is in thine.'

The Koran is silent on the subject of St Joseph, but not so Mohammedan tradition which gives him as a companion to Mary – even in the Temple. There is no suggestion that he was the father of Jesus. He took Mary to Egypt, where they lived poorly. Mary was even obliged to glean in the wheat fields.

A fanciful tale is told of her going to Rome with St Peter and St John to preach to Nero. Peter was crucified, head down. Mary and John fled, hotly pursued by the emissaries of Nero. The earth opened and sheltered the holy fugitives, a prodigy which converted Nero!

According to the Mohammedan tradition Mary did not long survive the Ascension of her son, dying six or seven years afterwards, at the age of 51.

Thus does the Koran tell of Jesus and Mary. I repeat what I have already said: What are they there for at all? They dominate the scene – not in point of the space given to them, but by the sheer dynamism of the facts which are set down about them. Jesus and Mary are transferred from the pages of the gospel and almost exactly as we know them. But in that new setting they are deprived of function and even of meaning. What then are those gigantic figures moving about in the Koran for?

May we embark on some pious conjecturing based on the interaction of human circumstances with God's method of shaping the course of things! Would it not be a likely starting-off point that when the Koran was composed, Christianity had already so far progressed towards being the Catholic or universal religion that it could not be ignored. The comprehensive importation into the Koran of the central figures of Christianity represented the providing of a sort of foundation for the new religion. In this way Islam would gain solidity from

the possession of an accepted structure. Likewise it would gather into itself scattered elements inclined towards Christianity. This could explain why Jesus and Mary are there in such prominence and yet without purpose of function.

But Jesus and Mary cannot go any place without making their presence felt. During the centuries many graces must have come to the individual Mohammedan from reading and thinking about those Holy Ones. More than that, those persons always tend to take possession. And may not this be the eventual divine sequel to their strange incorporation in the Mohammedan system?

But that conversion of Islam is not going to take place of itself. Always human cooperation forms a necessary condition. So Jesus and Mary will be left waiting in Mohammedanism until we go to help them to explain and assert themselves. It is true that the Koran paints that holy pair in big lines and in vivid colours, but to Mohammedan eyes that image is out of focus and out of practical relation to everyday life. Truly could the Mohammedan echo the cry of the man in Acts 8.31: 'How can I understand except some man tell me?' What rich substance for explaining rests in all that Koran material!

You Came To Me Affectionately When Others Called Me Mad...

I grant to myself the pleasure and the privilege of speaking approving words to our legionaries who are engaged in the visiting of mental patients. Those efforts do particular service to the Legion, because that is a work which must receive our devotion: it is among the pitiful and painful works. Yet its very character tends to exclude it from attention and the Legion is not giving it enough attention.

I suppose it could be said that there is no other work in the Legion which is more difficult. It is not, of course, of the brand of our hostels where on any given evening you may walk into a pitched battle and sustain injury, and where even the most peaceful evening is not free from the feeling of adventure.

Your task is not severe in that way. Its chief difficulty springs up from inside yourself, from disheartenment in some form. You will be inclined to think that there is little value in the work either for yourselves or for the patients.

The lack of variety and signs of progress deprives you of the natural aids which are available in other occupations. But all this is only equivalent to saying that you are engaged in an exercise of the highest legionary spirit.

A phrase in the handbook calls for 'a stiffening up of our spirit'. If there is any employment in the Legion which requires that stiffening of spirit, it is this one. It can weigh you down if you let it. So your work more than others, must be firmly joined to spiritual roots. Legionary quality must be developed sufficient to stay the course. Initial elements of pity and interest soon exhaust themselves and then there is a struggle to keep going. In what follows I ramble over the whole field of your subject. I am going to mobilise an astonishingly large number of considerations which not only provide adequate motives for persevering but which definitely recommend it as a work of special choice.

I begin in a way which may seem to be a little light but which I mean to raise to a higher plane. I point out that Our Lady is symbolised in the Church by the moon and that the moon has in a strange fashion always been associated with mental ailments. Formerly the conviction on that point was so complete that the name 'lunatic' derived from the moon. The Latin word for moon is *luna*. It was supposed that the serene silver orb exerted a sinister influence on some poor minds.

Daily our millions of legionaries proclaim the Antiphon: 'Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in battle array?' Our Lady is suitably described as the moon because thereby is shown very well the relation between herself and her son. The moon shines with the light of the sun: it has no light of its own. Similarly Our Lady is

lustrous with the light of her child: she lives by him; what she gives is his.

So I begin with that particular symbolism of Our Lady as the moon: and through that traditional superstition as to the moon's part in mental troubles, I invite you to regard her as your special source of confidence. In your cause, as in every other cause, she will be triumphant by the omnipotence which she transmits.

Or to vary somewhat the above imagery, Our Lady will put the moon, typifying the dread mental ailments, beneath her feet. It is not childish to import Our Lady into improbable situations, because no matter where she enters, there is solution. She accompanies you as the health of your very sick ones.

You attack your problem in her name. Your purpose is to bring her into action. You are her agents, her means of fulfilling herself. Going to your unfortunates, you discharge what must be a unique aspect of her motherhood. Therefore you can rightly expect that an unusual degree of assistance will be given to you – indeed that she may be more with you in that work than she would be in another work. That is if we may be permitted to differentiate between the works to which we are sent.

Being present with you, she will be active in many ways. She will sanctify you because of what you are doing and she will strengthen you for it; and through your approach she will work on the patients in salutary forms.

There will be many of the cases whose mental state will, because God wills it so, remain unchanged. His loving purposes are being served by that infirmity. But likewise, as the history of mankind shows and the pages of the gospels particularly evidence, there is a section whom God afflicts but from whom he is in certain circumstances

willing to lift the affliction. In this latter process you may have an important part to play, namely that of supplying ingredients which enable him to grant that relief. If you were not visiting them, this would not be effected.

Supposing that their affliction has originated from incorrect conduct on their part, could it not be that by the faith, charity and sacrifice of your attentions to them, you have helped to neutralise their debt?

Or we might state a different position. Perhaps their deprivation is for reward and not for penalty. Often a person is suffering on account of sin but not for his own sin. This seems to me to apply very much inside families. I have seen countless cases where sinless members have been privileged to bear the offences of others gravely culpable in the same family, thereby to save them and in the same process to tread a loftier road themselves. Into such a dispensation as this you enter and by your sacrificial labours you ease the burden.

And so you can with confidence look forward to improvement of various kinds in those you visit. But if this were never to operate, it should make no difference to you. Your motive goes deeper than any desire to accomplish a physical benefit.

I put before you Chapter 25 of the Gospel of St Mathew. It described the judgement of men at the end of the world. Our Lord is represented as addressing the good and summoning them to the heavenly Kingdom. He gives them the reason: 'I was hungry and you gave me to eat, thirsty and you gave me to drink, naked and you clothed me, sick and in prison and you visited me.'

And they say back to him: 'Lord, when did we ever do those things to you?' And he said: 'Whenever you did it to one of my least brethren you did it to me.' Those words

of his form one of the declarations of the doctrine of the Mystical Body. We minister to Our Lord not only when we are dealing with those stated classes of misfortune but when we deal with all other classes of misery and with all types of men.

But it is to be noted that Our Lord does in that passage assign a particular category to the more miserable ones; a special emphasis of pity enters in. Not only is he served in those people but he is ministered to in his grim necessity. He is suffering in them. Of course his list is not a final one. One could supplement it. For instance you could add on other grave categories of physical distress, such as the down-and-out types, those who are diseased in awful ways and then that one which you have devotedly made your own, the mentally harassed.

More than that, I wonder if among all those different classes yours may not rank the highest because it is the very least? All those others have lost something external. They have been deprived of some quality: liberty, health, esteem, peace, comfort, food; and these perhaps only temporarily. They have retained the priceless gift of man, their personality, their will, their mind.

But the mentally troubled people have lost something of themselves. They have lost much of their personality. For that reason we might boldly seize on the keyword in Our Lord's utterance and urge that they are the least of all the least, and therefore that in those persons you go to Our Lord rendering him a unique service.

An intriguing thought is that one of the charges hurled against Our Lord frequently was that he was mad. I would imagine that it was a very common accusation, because he was moving around making strange claims for himself. To materialistic and cynical minds these would

have sounded preposterous, insane. So to follow up that Judgement scene, it should form an admirable train of thought for you that he may say to you on the Last Day: 'You came to me affectionately when others called me mad and said I had a devil.'

When tempted with those misgivings as to lack of progress and as to whether you should not be otherwise employed, those other compelling ideas will fortify you and keep you on your course. The real danger which lies before you is that of judging a work according to what you think to be success or satisfaction. These are dubious tests. They could point in the opposite direction to the true one – and they do in your case. In other works some sort of fruit is to be seen. Even if a moral growth is not evident, there may be a growth of friendship. Some appreciation will be shown of the legionary efforts for them and in time there will usually be an improvement in the quality of those being approached.

But in your mission you see so little. Year follows year and there has not been the slightest improvement. Even if there has been an advance, it may not be so easy to observe it. Seeing them often, a slight ascent is not measurable. It is even possible for us to think they have receded, so that those dismal words may hammer in your mind: 'I am wasting my time.'

So once again I say it to you that you could not make better use of your time and abilities. This work is a special proof of faith, for on faith you are thrown back; all the minor aids have fallen away from you. Faith is the sole motive-power left to keep you moving. The scripture says that he who perseveres to the end shall be saved; thereby assuring us that faith without perseverance is empty, just like faith without good works. Keep your eye upon perseverance as

the crowning Christian virtue. 'The patient man shall speak of victory,' continues scripture. Perseverance and patience amount to much the same thing.

There is also the important practical and psychological side of your work. You are dealing with a complicated problem and you must bring some wisdom and certain human rules to bear on it.

The first one I present is that you must not underrate those persons. Of course we should not underrate *anybody*. To err in that way is to render ultra-offence to them and so it is that the handbook almost tiresomely insists on the quality of respect as due by us to all and as being the primary key of influence. In this we are found falling short even in regard to the ordinary people around us. We view their defects harshly and we eye their good qualities without the warmth which would cause them to glow back at us. In this way a wrong relation is established and the injustice is committed of assigning persons to a status inferior to their true one.

If that is the tendency in regard to the ordinary people around, it is a certainty in regard to your poor world. The signs of their impoverishment stare you in the face. You must resolutely resist that evidence of your sense. You must not let yourself degrade them in your thoughts, because your behaviour towards them will depend on their status in your mind.

Many of your poor sufferers will show abnormality in their faces. Some will be vacant and some even repulsive, contorted into strange inhuman expressions. So it is no simple act to give respect and to see possibilities. Yet you must do these things. How?

Well, here is one thought which belongs to that very misery and yet which answers it. Many of those persons,

and who will limit their number, are already registered for Heaven, being without sin and incapable of sin, almost as close to God as if they were in Purgatory! This is really an awesome reflection, providing that needed drastic readjustment of improper thinking.

Delving a while ago into Mohammedan traditions, I discovered a kindred idea, helpful to us here, that the insane are often regarded by the superstitious Moslems as sainted. Madmen and fools are esteemed by them the favourites of Heaven. It is believed that their minds have been taken away from their tenement of clay to talk with angels in the high regions. Therefore people will beg the blessing of an idiot when they meet him in the street and bending forward they will kiss his garment with the most profound veneration.

Superstitious or not, a little of that extremity of respect must adorn your own method.

Another working rule for you to go by is that they understand far more than they are given credit for. They appreciate a right attitude to them. This does not alter the fact that they can trade on it. Sometimes their crudity of behaviour is shown in a cunning way, that is lavished on those whom they know will bear it from them, rather than on the officials whom they hold in awe. You who are in the category of friendship may be the recipients of rough demonstrations at their hands. That should hearten rather than discourage you. It is a sign that you are getting on well with them.

I suppose we could generalise and say that most things look worse than they really are. Take the unromantic example of a very sick stomach. It is only a slight disorder in one organ, yet it reduces one to wreckage. We are so demoralised that we could not put up a fight

to save our lives. I am sure that a similar process operates in the mind, more so perhaps than in the body. We know that the intolerable seasickness is not as bad as it seems. But we are not so well able to reassure ourselves in the case of some disturbance of the mind. Everything in that department exaggerates itself so that a particular upset might be only of a minor order like unto the sick stomach. Excitement or shocks can produce bad effects on minds which are precariously balanced. Conceivably these may be as much in the line of remedy as that disturbed stomach. The remedy which you will offer to the victim is the certainty that you are a faithful friend, sure to be along this week and all weeks, interested, smiling, soothing, sympathetic; ready to listen and even willing to receive abuse. That remedy may quickly abate the mental seasickness.

Another example, if it is not over-labouring the picture, is that of the drunkard. He has delivered himself into the grip of his enemy and has abandoned all effort. He lets himself drift in a tide of neglect and depravity. Nevertheless that homeless-looking position is only a few degrees worse than the seasickness. Remove the cause and the decent human being reappears.

Admittedly it is not easy to establish standards of comparison between these purely physical ills and the infinitely less tangible field of mental trouble. But my contention is only that there is a certain amount of parity, at least in some cases and that we must look for those cases. Or rather I would go further and say that our behaviour towards all the cases should be the same, i.e. one of looking for the best in them even where we have no justification for thinking that there are sound elements on which to base our campaign towards amelioration.

So apply the analogy of the seasick man or the drunkard to your cases. It is a legitimate supposition that a little failure in the mind can have the power to produce a disproportionate demoralisation and leave the subject flopping around in a helpless way.

Your principle must be to find, so to speak, a solid spot in them on which you will aim to build. This is no more than the general plan of life. For instance, the communicating of knowledge proceeds from the known to the unknown. Starting off with one item, another kindred one is added to it, and so on indefinitely. It is a process like unto the growth of a plant. The new grows out of the old and becomes part of it. Finally there is a complete growth.

Or take another example from medicine. A person's skin has been so badly damaged that its ordinary recuperative power has been destroyed. The remedy is to graft. A portion of the patient's healthy skin, no more than the size of a postage stamp, is taken and caused to adhere to the devastated area. When it has set, the same is repeated again and again. Those patches are not put down methodically beside each other but, as one might think, haphazardly. Eventually that living patchwork expands and covers the whole space. Perhaps the special virtue of this grafting image is that if you are able to produce a number of little ameliorations of different kinds in a patient, you might be able to accomplish a restoration resembling that marvellous grafting business.

So, look for the healthy territory in them with a view to making it a taking-off point for further exploration. Try to find something in which they take an interest; a hobby, a line of thought, games, animals, flowers, pictures, an aptitude of any kind – for writing, poetry, drawing,

painting, chess, studies; or lesser pursuits like crosswords or other competitions. Your ingenuity must be put on over time!

Even if you can only find a single sensible idea, it is for you to concentrate on that and seek to build out from it. If after a while you should be able to observe something proceeding from your efforts, it would undoubtedly encourage you. You have broken the stagnation. To the patient that gain might represent itself as in the order of the sensational, with consequent stabilising power.

One hears it stated often that those patients do not feel their unhappy condition. Such a general statement cannot be made. It cannot be said: Here is a dividing line; these are afflicted and those are not. The mind is too complex to be ticketed like that. It can be said seriously that we all have a touch of madness in us. Maybe that suggestion expresses an idea which is good; that what is thus rather crudely put is only equivalent to saying that the breath of inspiration is in us.

A quality may be normal and yet can so easily go out of control. Good tempered persons enter into violent rages. Prudent ones can be carried off into extreme follies. Kind ones can act cruelly. Yet basically there is nothing wrong with them. The essential worth is there even though it commits treason occasionally. So there is no need to be unduly dismayed if at times we feel extravagant stirrings in ourselves. They may be an indication of vehement mental vigour whose ruthless surging finds it hard to compose themselves to strict order.

The fullness of life can be aggressive, even explosive. A little too much effervescence and things are out of control temporarily – or perhaps permanently if unchecked. It would be an error to conclude that someone is ‘mental’

because uncouth displays are sometimes given. If the like were never to assert itself in us, it might be no good sign. Is too much balance, or too little of that mental excitement, a good thing? It could mean a descent into the realm of slower mental movement; that is to say into unintelligence. Who would be a clod for the sake of escaping the discomforts which are the inevitable product of an intensely active brain?

Genius and many mental inconveniences abide close together. As the choice strains of the violin are dependent on the tension of the strings, so in regard to the tensions of the mind which possess their disadvantages as well as their gifts. But may I venture on the thought that it is so often the fault of the owner of that delicate brain if it goes astray? Too frequently the genius regards himself as a law unto himself, so that he will not impose law on his mind. Instead of seeking to balance its erratic movements with humble, holy and calming ideas and behaviour, the opposite treatment is administered to it. If something in any order, spiritual, mental, physical, is only constructed to bear a certain strain, it is looking for disaster to pile more weight upon it.

So, just as it is unprofitable to try to make distinctions between the ordinary ones among us and that alleged class of genius, so let us not allow ourselves to interpose a sharp dividing line between ourselves and the mental class for whom we are working. The vulgar phrase is applied to them that there is a screw loose in them. The screw is not loose in them alone. It is loose in all humanity in varying degrees and ways. What does one do with a loose screw? One tightens it. To do that very thing is the legionary mission to all men. It is your trade in regard to your poor folk. Set yourself to tighten that screw. A little turn may be all that is required in many cases.

Your means is contact, and the soul of that contact is genuine interest. This cannot be put on like a garment. If you have not got that interest, the mere contact is not going to be fruitful. A lifeless contact is like the dead wires which do not carry the electricity. It will be dead in the natural order and still more so in the spiritual order. For in both of those orders interest is akin to love. In the higher order love brings grace.

As cannot be said too often, interest is shown by listening. If you are really interested in a person, you will listen to him. But just observe carefully what goes on when people meet and talk. How few can claim a sustained attention! How few are prepared to listen at all!

So do not go to volley forth a lot of talk. Go to prove your love-inspired interest. This is doubly necessary because you are dealing with those who are full of an inferiority sense. To counter this you must convince them that you value them. Someone has written that admiration elicits gentleness and warmth from an ageing woman. But not from her alone; all need some drops of that intoxicating commodity. Praise is too meanly measured out. Give it, and at once is visible the hunger for it.

Let your speech be a self-starter which will set their tongues moving. Then let them talk to their hearts' content. Stimulate their memories – rake up the days of their youth, their home-life and of course it is permissible for you to show the further interest of commenting and questioning in moderation. Then on subsequent visits come back on those things and let them see you have remembered. They mark that fact. Do not let appearances cause you to think otherwise. They are touched in their inner depths.

Do not deluge them with religion. But do not leave it out either. You will need wisdom to tell you when and how much. To be especially avoided is the air of what is called preaching. Here you have an expedient in talking the Legion to them. Tell them you want their good opinion of it eventually their membership. Describe its adventurous operations in all places. So doing you cannot keep away from its spiritual roots. But these enter in naturally so that you are teaching without that flavour of preaching.

To those who are readers, the life of Edel Quinn should be introduced. It is a thrilling, heartening tale of an invalid who surpassed her plight and helped to mould the world and make history. I have never known of anyone who heard her story and remained unmoved by it. Create that mood and use it as the foundation for a building.

Auxiliary membership must be an early objective, and then – to the extent that it is practicable – our new adjutorian degree. Groups of those members could then be formed who would then essay recruiting among their fellows. In every other way too the patients should be encouraged to help each other.

But if those degrees of membership are practicable, why not active membership? Many mental hospitals have praesidia composed of the inmates. To have such in the institution is to set at work there a potent leaven. Those legionaries have abundant time to spend on their activities amongst the other patients and they can raise themselves to a high pitch of sanctity. The value of their Legion membership – on its lesser level as a therapeutic or healing force to themselves – has been so evident as to be everywhere recognised by the medical staffs of those places.

More than in any other legionary work you must associate yourself with Our Lady. You are more thrown

back on spiritual considerations, because your words will weigh lighter than in any other work. Sometimes you are not even listened to. So more weight must proceed from the spiritual background. Concentrate your thought on the vital principle of your legionary mission: your approach to those persons must be in such a spirit of faith and love that through you the person of Our Lord is being seen and served by his mother. You go bearing her.

As perhaps a particular aspect of devotion, you might place before you the babyhood of Our Lord. For so many of the patients will exhibit that quality of immaturity and helplessness. Your role becomes that of enabling Our Lady to mother her helpless babe. So in the more difficult cases keep her in the forefront of your consciousness as thus engaged with Jesus. It would be an impiety to think that such a work of pure faith would be left without its due fruit.

Success. What is success? Your great success will consist, as I have already suggested in persevering. It will entitle you to hear addressed to yourselves one day those words of shattering import: 'Thou good and faithful servant.'

And what about your patients? The method of your work has made a peremptory claim on the divine help and that help shall be given according to promise. There will be success in every case, not of course according to your notions. In many cases there will be nothing to see in the way of improvement so that the counsel against loss of heart must be borne in mind. But in a certain number of cases you will see an improvement which is ascribable to your work. And no doubt there will be even more – complete cures.

In a couple of places in scripture we read of veritable campaigns of healing by Our Lord. One reference reads

that they brought the sick to him from far and wide, and the stupefying comment is added that he healed them one and all.

Why should it not be hoped that in your work, which reflects back to him so many of the things he taught and asked for: unshakable faith, love, heroic sacrifice, tender pity, perseverance and other virtues – he will operate on similarity open-handed terms, healing them all – some in soul, others in mind, in body, in visible forms or invisible ones – in the end *all*.

When nature has come to its last gasp, the supernatural often intervenes with an impressive demonstration to remind man that there is a higher law which can be summoned by heroic faith.

Our Potential Membership is the Uncommitted Catholic Population

I am forced to say that to spend a day in a Legion atmosphere and then to return to the normal level of thought and idealism is a psychological experience. It is not even in the order of leaving a warm room and going out into the cold. The difference between what we are inclined to call the Legion mentality and the common mentality is something radical. It is a manifestation suggesting the broad divisions of positive as against negative, of optimism as against pessimism in the community. Unquestionably the Legion affords a practical idealism based on Christian doctrine which tends towards the fulfilment of everyday duty and at the same time to holiness. It makes the best of both worlds because it unites them. It represents a genuine loving of one's neighbour as contrasted with the skin-deep products which are in evidence on all sides. Today humanitarianism

is paraded as a substitute for Christianity. But it tends to remain impersonal and at best it is a flower without any roots. On the other hand, the Legion seeks to divide humanity into individual persons and its gamut of interest takes in everything from pure conversion to recreation, as Christianity is supposed to do.

Really I think that the Legion contains everything which is needed for the present period of pessimism and for future Christian building. We must clear our minds in regard to what we are seeking. We should realise that we are thinking in different terms to the governments and the newspapers. These are concentrating on grandiose schemes while our thinking is along the more modest lines of religious morale. Yet our programme really contains everything, whereas theirs may only amount to a mirage.

It is quite possible to establish a sort of worldly paradise and a spiritual hell at the same time. I give you Sweden as a case in point. There the grave problems of society have, according to popular acclaim, been solved; the edge has been taken off poverty and misery; and yet that country is a spiritual inferno. Such that it could provoke a hard boiled journal like *Time* to send over a special commissioner to investigate the state of things there because it did not believe it could be as bad as alleged.

His report stated that things were worse even than they had been represented. I ask if that materialistic solution to our problems is what we want. If we reflect, it will be evident that it is possible to solve economic problems at a price which is too much to pay. What shall it profit a nation to gain the whole world and at the same time suffer the loss of its soul?

On the other hand, consider what the Legion has in its treasury and can give. Its vivid, restless Christianity seeks

too numerous to mention – as the phrase puts it. If we succeed in the sort of plan that we have been proposing to ourselves, surely it would make our era like those splendid ones of the past in which religion shook off its fetters and resumed triumphant march!

Another salutary reason for spreading the Legion lies in its relation to Mary. She is essential to religion. She is the mother of every soul, so much so that without her the soul would not have life. But she is a mother who cannot do her mother-work without fully expecting her children cooperate with her. Therefore that cooperation must be forthcoming and must include a couple of ingredients: appreciation of her role and a measure of loving service of her.

Outside the Legion (I make this as a general proposition subject to honourable exceptions) she does not obtain her due in those respects. For this reason, if there were no other, it is important that everybody be given the Legion mind in regard to her. In practice will this be given outside the Legion itself? Will it be given even through our works? Not completely, I think. I have been watching sections among whom we have been working and I do not discern in them any marked tendency towards the Legion Marian behaviour. In fact I would fear that there is a tendency towards regarding the Legion's attitude as being a little in the way of excess. Inevitably people who think thus would be led to take a step back. This could mean a withdrawal into definite deficiency. This would be an offence against Christianity itself, one which the Lord will not abide. So we must strive with a sort of desperation to make all see the Mary that we see, that wonder working maid who transforms everything she touches because she carries with her the source of all good.

to pour itself out in every direction from great to small. It is as tender as it is tough; as full of courage as it is of faith. Its women are as brave as its men, and its men are as gentle as its women. It has a heart for every employment that seeks to serve Jesus and his mother. It cleans up the home for an invalid with no less intensity of spirit than those four legionary brothers displayed recently when they entered an area which promised them a tombstone if they tried to promote Catholicism; or with which the 4,000 Chinese legionaries met their gruesome deaths.

The manifestation of spirited service is no select business obtainable only from the higher types or as a result of long special training. It is not the product of study or of profound thinking. It seems to be quite easily picked up. It seems capable to handling any problem. You can recruit a person into the ranks and in a matter of a few months you can send him off to court that tombstone. It strangely resembles Christianity viewed as a pure ideal, and it is for all.

The important consideration is that the legionary is not made of better material than the non-legionary. The raw material is the same, but the results are very different and that fact is there for all to see. I think it would be improper to pretend otherwise out of a false modesty. One is in the Legion and has that spirit and its full philosophy. One is not in the Legion and has not got those things. So the problem is how to extend that benefit on a comprehensive scale?

When we look around us, many commendable things meet the eye. There are plenty of excellent movements, but where in them is that extraordinary blend of things which go to make up the Legion: the action, the doctrine, the attitude towards Mary our mother, and other things

To what extent are we acquitting ourselves of our duty of getting those who are outside to come into the Legion? The fact is that we are not really trying to recruit, gloss it over as we may. People have almost to force themselves into the Legion. We offer people auxiliary membership when we should be suggesting active membership. We are proportioning the recruiting to the works we have in hand, rather than the reverse process of recruiting as a first principle and then finding the additional works for the new manpower. We are improperly selective, even exclusive.

Apart from the gravity of denying suitable persons the philosophy which I venture to declare vital, any sort of exclusiveness on our part must inevitably constitute us as a clique. It would stir up a vein of opposition to us and then by freak revenge it would confine our membership to persons who will not be the most suitable. If there was a sort of feeling against the Legion, it would only be persons of rather determined will who would enter. Having thus become a separated and unpopular section, our influence would be reduced to vanishing point. I have already contended that this would inferentially mean the repudiation by the community of the things the Legion stands for and that would be a lamentable situation.

But in the measure that the typical material of a place enters the Legion in number, the above opposition melts away. More than that, the Legion visitation and its other works would be benignly viewed and an atmosphere created which would be favourable for the universal extension of an idealistic programme.

Now let us analyse some of the reasons for that hesitant and narrow recruiting. I think that the root cause is our present works. These latter points are too restrictive and

not in line with our idea that the potential membership of the Legion is the unmobilised Catholic population. Our present tasks engage only a fraction of that Catholic potential. Neither are they proportioned to our goal of seeking out every soul with intent to do it large good.

A secondary aspect is that the bulk of those outside the Legion would not be willing to undertake the works which we are now offering them. Therefore what has to be faced up to – and I think it is beyond a question of yea or nay – is a great widening of our works. In the first place, there is room for such a widening inside what has been called our traditional programme. We cannot be said to be visiting either houses or institutions with sufficient intensity. A visitation which goes a couple of times a year to a home is not visitation according to Legion ideas, because there is no friendship and no development. There is no intimacy in the performance. Indeed I think it would have to be admitted that such a visitation would be little better than Symbolic Action.

Nor have we exploited that traditional programme, which would ambition the full Christianising (including brightening and embellishment) of every aspect of life. A part of this would be the running of betterment and cultural groups, classes, clubs, societies and even sports clubs. To do all this would need a much increased membership. New members are coming in to us, but so slowly as to demonstrate that a radical alteration of our method is necessary if even our traditional programme is to be covered.

Then even if we did cover it, I think it would still leave the title of this article a mere theory. The Catholic multitude would still be outside the ranks of any type of organisation. It would remain in possession of

undeveloped notions of religion and it would be an easy prey for false propaganda.

As things stand, we would not be able to cater for that potential if it suddenly entered. The Legion is not ready to receive them. The ordinary army has a framework and scheme which can be expanded to meet the emergency of war, but we have not the ideas or the framework to receive all the uncommitted Catholics if they suddenly decided to join us – which could happen as the result of some special situation.

Now I come to what is perhaps new in our consideration – the question of those who will not undertake the Legion under present conditions. Take the ordinary rough-and-tumble man or woman in the lower social bracket, or even the chronically unemployed, a type whom our programme has been pleased to designate as ‘the man from the corner’. These may have little education. They are painfully shy about their religious knowledge and they also exaggerate their other deficiencies. It would be impossible to get the average one of them into the Legion if it is to mean their being immediately sent on visitation or on any other work which would entail the talking of religion. In reality they can quickly be made capable of it, but they do not know see this. Therefore if we want those classes in our ranks and emphatically we must have them, then we must provide tasks which they will recognise as within their scope. Our agenda says that this might call for the acceptance of manual tasks. This suggestion has provoked alarm on a grand scale – as if it meant a total departure from existing practice and a change of principle. So let us examine it closely with a view to establishing our principle in the matter. How much is new in this? We have already incorporated in our works such things as the following:

Works entailing duties of a household character, for instance in our own hostels; the conducting of classes of various types; clerical work in certain cases; elementary nursing duties; supervising and organising; works of service in general – so beloved and ardently recommended by the Legion, so Christian, and indeed to a large extent a test of sincerity.

To some extent the element of personal and religious contact would enter into those employments and of course the legionary must neglect no opportunity of deepening spirituality. But in some of those cases the opportunity would be small. Would that invalidate the work as a Legion one? I do not think so, and I propose the following.

An elderly widow was no longer capable of looking after her land. Her plight became grave. A friend of mine, the retired superintendent of a mental hospital, took it on himself to bring her land into cultivation. That lone digging did not afford opportunity for discussing religion, but could a nobler serving of religion be found? Incidentally it would set whole countryside thinking in terms of true charity.

Take also the long, tiresome task of cutting the bread in our hostels. Solitary, hedged away, yet these hostels turn out the finest types of legionaries.

I think we would want to guard against imaging some work which is purely religious in type; that is involving total talking of religion to another person and then setting up that as the model which must be conformed to. In practice that would be a fictitious model. Only such works as the apostolate to the crowd, or conversion work, would conform fully to that pattern. Here I think we must contemplate Our Lord and his mother whose time was

not wholly given to the proclaiming of religion. Can we not associate our manual tasks with his carpentry or with her household chores?

I do not think that we need fear an adverse effect from even the most prosaic task. The Legion must be taken as a whole. The amount of 'direct religion' in our tasks is by no means the only sanctifying element. Every moment is intended to be stimulating and sanctifying. At the Praesidium meeting, there are the considerable prayers, the spiritual reading and the Allocutio. Then the reports are the linking up of the work with its doctrinal roots, thus turning every occupation into a living in Christ with Mary.

In addition the legionary is subjected in some degree to the play of such things as the Curia, Congresses, Acies, Reunions, Auxiliary Rallies, Patricians, Praetorians, Retreats, Legion Holidays, Peregrinatio Pro Christo, Maria Legionis and so forth. No one in the Legion can escape from the potent atmosphere which reigns inside that comprehensive circle of formation.

It is reasonable to suppose that this total process of legionising can avail to make people wholehearted who came into the Legion doubtfully and would then render them willing to undertake works which at first they would not touch. So very timidly I put the question: Is a task involving religious talking any more sanctifying than the digging of that old lady's field, or that bread-cutting, it being understood that these tasks are being done in the full spirit of Legion idealism, i.e. in union with Jesus digging (as he must have done quite often himself) or with Mary busily engaged in the daily routine of her home?

Some apprehension has been voiced lest we might abandon that vital item of our rule which requires

substantial work. There is no question of any modification of our rules. We are going to continue to insist on substantial work, and it is the function of the praesidium and later the function of the Curia, to see that each and every member performs substantial work.

There is no need to suppose that this process of widening our works has to be accomplished at a stroke, like a sort of revolution. No, our motto continues in force: 'Evolution, not Revolution'. What immediately happens here is a broadening of our outlook and then the proceeding along thin end of the wedge principles. This has been our method since the beginning. We have put a few people experimenting; and as each step proved fruitful, more have been assigned to the work. The wedge has been pushed in fully. A great, new work has been developed.

Now I come to something which I regard as of supreme importance in the Legion, because it is a vital principle of life itself. We must experiment. This means taking risks, entering on unknown ground with consequential peril. But the Legion is reasonably proofed against all those dangers. The system is capable alike of absorbing and of rejecting. Many examples of the latter stand out in our history. It might surprise many to learn that in the earlier days we experimented with the idea of study as a satisfying of the work obligation. That was a case where we were conclusively proved to be wrong – I do not mean in the experimenting but in the particular item. Well, we had to turn our backs on it and to bar the door against it. It might be that we would have to do the same in regard to certain of the works which would be tried in this proposed widening of scope. What of it? In that very failure would we not have been safeguarding our idealism, one part

of which is that we must never be static or rest content. Another part is that we are never to be afraid, a principle which is beautifully set out by Newman: 'They who never venture, never gain. To be ever safe is to be ever feeble. And to do some substantial good, is the compensation for much incidental imperfection.'

Let us be greatly daring and suppose the Legion in a small town to be possessed of a membership of 500. And why not, if the idea be that of mobilising everybody to apostleship! Surely this would not mean, as some have feared, that there would be nobody doing the visitation of homes and hospitals? At present members do not abandon the difficult tasks for more congenial ones. Why should this happen in the future? It must be the care of the praesidium and of the Curia to see that no such advantage is taken of any widening of the Legion works.

In regard to visitation, I have heard you on all occasions professing your ardent appreciation of that work. You have declared the good it was doing to those to whom you were going and the still great good it was doing to yourselves. Then how would it be possible that you would turn your back on it, or that you would turn others from it? Of course the visitation would not be dropped. It should be increased. For you would have more members. Out of that 500 a great number would be engaged on visitation and covering it adequately instead of after a token fashion as is sometimes the case.

In addition every other untouched work could be attended to in such a way as to help the recipient and the giver alike. All that 500 would be attending their praesidia and imbibing the full Legion education.

Surely the impress of all this on that town would be devastating; so that duty (that forgotten thing) and public

spirit (that absent thing) would come into their own and life would be lived on the levels depicted in the gospel!

A nation is composed of its communities. Suppose, as a document known to you says: 'A nation were to arise which built its life on lofty standards and held up to the world the example of a whole people putting its faith into practice and hence as a matter of course solving its problems, who would doubt that such a nation would be a shining light to the world, so that the world would come to sit at its feet for the purpose of learning.' Those words were not added to the handbook yesterday. They were always a Legion objective.

In any widening of our works we must not lay ourselves open to the charge that we are depriving people of employment. So we must keep away from those needs which would be subjects for ordinary contracts. But otherwise our ambitions should expand towards everything helpful to our neighbour, even to the creating of employment and the building up of industry, the aiding of our districts to improve themselves, the reclaiming of what is waste.

Our visitation takes us often into dwellings and surrounding which are miserable. Our respect for those who live there should compel us to put them into order.

The blind and other afflicted classes, and likewise the young, offer infinite opportunities to serve them.

Legionaries with taste could help girls to make the most of their charms. Other qualifications should similarly be put to devoted use among those who are less endowed.

We never hear of legionaries being sent to help mothers of families with their household work for the sake of freeing them a little. Many of them would wish to join the Legion but cannot do so except they are helped with their burden.

Those and other kindred purposes should receive the attention of the Legion, but they will remain a pious dream until the membership is available to cover them. This brings us back to our theme: we must drastically revise our present ideas of recruiting and cast our nets widely for that potential.

Jesus and Mary were citizens of Nazareth. They lived the common life of that village with perfection. Every person and thing in it was an object of deepest interest to them; we could not conceive them as being indifferent or neglectful in any respect. Now by the law of the Mystical Body, they live on in us and in our places with no less degree of concern. In fact with more concern, inasmuch as Our Lord lives more intensely in a baptised community even than he did in Nazareth. That solicitude has to display itself through the Mystical Body of which we are the members. If we are inactive, we fail the body and the solicitude of Jesus and Mary cannot issue.

That is the charter for our community service.

De Montfort's True Devotion to Mary

Because Louis-Marie de Montfort is a latter-time saint, many think that his system of devotion is a comparatively modern development. But he disclaims having originated the devotion or any aspect of it. He gives examples of persons who, seven hundred years before his own day, had made the Consecration after the same fashion which he himself recommends. Moreover, he asserts that the idea was not new even then. He quotes Boudon as saying that it went still further back in that precise form. Finally he claims that the idea would spring naturally from the very foundations of Christianity.

From this it is to be seen that the True Devotion is no invention of a few centuries ago, but merges into the mists of antiquity. That makes it ancient enough, but possibly not enough to dispel the uneasiness of those who think (as the bulk of Protestants would) that the True Devotion and Mariology in general belong to an era of Catholic departure from primitive purity of doctrine. Most of that

school of thought assigns the fifth or sixth century as the time when Mariology began to appear. When we analyse this accusation closely, it becomes evident that the date-line in their mind is the Council of Ephesus, and that they believe that it ushered in a new and incorrect tendency which proceeded to take destructive possession.

But they are totally misconstruing that event and its surrounding situation – to the extent of reversing the facts. It is senseless to suppose that everything new in the way of doctrine began from Ephesus. The council only put into the form of a definition something which the ordinary Catholic people had had in perfect perspective, but which certain innovators were trying to twist out of its original shape. It was the Nestorians who were the disturbers and who were condemned. It was the old belief which was defined and which continued.

Cardinal Newman gives us a list of saints from the first century up to Ephesus whose utterances on this subject would be identical with what would be said after Ephesus. St Augustine, addressing the Virgin, would typify them: 'He who made thee is made in thee.'

That belief was the primary Christian doctrine that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is but a single person and that Mary is the mother of that person. The shepherds saw things in that simplicity when on the first Christmas they hastened over to see the divine babe and his mother. So the Magi saw things at the end of their star-guided journey. And so did the apostles and the other companions of Our Lord. Mary was his mother; there was no confusion in the matter. They believed in Jesus as the Messiah and they enveloped his mother and himself in a common belief and love.

The early Christians did not reason out things as the modern Catholic theologians would. They saw the

position simply and they saw it accurately; the mother and her child, the promised pair through whom salvation had come. They never thought of drawing distinctions which would mean that Mary was not really the Mother of the Divine Redeemer.

The early years, when Christianity was at once growing and struggling for very existence, were not favourable for those minute speculations which are required for the full expanding of doctrine, and which on the other hand must necessarily suggest error. The process is good when the inspiration of the Church is recognised. Otherwise it will produce unending fissuring.

I suppose that it was the conversion of the Empire about 300 which really threw the Church into its problems. Its governors could appear without hindrance and set about their work of administration. The open proclaiming of the Faith brought with it the opportunity to criticise and to dissent. This tendency would be stimulated by the fact that the wind of official favour would waft into Christianity many elements which were not fervent and perhaps worse than that. So every day brought its new light and its new error, with corresponding need for correction by the Church. But where the sects deceive themselves is in supposing that this process of correction and development represented a deviation from the earlier perfection. In spite of their own myriad of contradictory opinions those sects claim – over a gap of one thousand years – to be the heirs of the ‘early purity of doctrine’. No, they mistake the position: they are not the inheritors of original truth but of the pruned-off false growths.

It was an idea of Cardinal Newman that every Christian doctrine, including those concerning Our Lord himself, has appeared to undergo a sort of magnification as

time went on. This might lead people without a proper historical background to think that things had changed, whereas there has been no change other than that of filling out, as a child would become an adult.

In other words the central idea of each Catholic doctrine was always there. New aspects may have presented themselves, and we are tempted to think that because we see a doctrine in fuller detail than the early Christians did, we see it better. I do not think that we would be justified in thinking so as a general proposition. The seeing of a doctrine in greater detail may not be a better seeing of it. For instance, does the modern Catholic who views Jesus in the light of all the protective and explanatory definitions of the Church see him any better than the early Christians saw him? If the pages of the gospel are closely read, they seem to show a faith in Jesus and an attitude towards him identical with what would proceed from the present-day Catholic.

Likewise, when one studies the pages of history which tell of the scenes of enthusiasm which attended the proclamation at Ephesus of Mary as the Mother of God, is one safe in supposing that we of today really appreciate her any better than did those rapturous lovers of hers fifteen hundred years ago? Forms may vary but the essence remains the same.

And this is not to say that Ephesus was the point of origin of that understanding love of her, as some people imagine. It is to be noted that the very cathedral in which that proclamation took place bore the name of Mary, proving that Ephesus inaugurated nothing new for the common believer. It only assured him that he was right. Mary in her completeness was there before Ephesus. How much before?

It was the first thought and teaching of apostolic Christianity that the Redemption reversed the Fall and reversed it in detail. Adam stood for Christ. Eve stood for Mary. All the circumstances were reproduced in Redemption with reverse action; that is restoring where the Fall had destroyed.

This teaching is of the first authority and is endorsed by the Church. Therefore, the relation of Eve to Adam is to be taken as an indication of the relation of Mary to Jesus. What was this?

Satan came to Eve and she believed in his word. She drew Adam into her sin and the human race fell: not in Eve but in Adam who was the head of humanity. After the Fall, Adam and Eve combined to have offspring through whom the original fault was passed on. It is important to be precise about Eve's part in order to see how it bears on Mary's place in the scheme of restoration. As said, mankind fell in Adam, not in Eve. If Eve alone sinned, mankind would not have fallen. But it is plain from scripture that only for Eve, Adam would not have sinned. She brought about his fall. This procedure is strangely reproduced in the case of Jesus and Mary. Man was not redeemed by Mary but by Christ. But this would not have taken place but for Mary. Her faith in Gabriel's announcement reversed Eve's faith in Satan's argument. She brought down Jesus from Heaven, just as Eve had brought down Adam in a different way. She inaugurated Redemption much as Eve had brought about the Fall. Mary's part was in strict proportion to Eve's.

Then Mary united with Jesus to bring forth a spiritual offspring – the Mystical Body. If her part in this is to be likewise proportionate to Eve's, then it has to be immense. For Eve's part in producing and bringing up children was

in quantity a greater part than Adam's. Adam generated the children, but Eve had most of the burden of them. It was her body that gave the child all its substance, and after that she had the absorbing duty of feeding and caring it. Adam was the head, but Eve had the direct care of the children. These circumstances would seem to be intended to indicate to us the place of Mary in Redemption. The race rose in Jesus and not in Mary, but Redemption would not have taken place except for Mary. Then if we apply Eve's function in the family to Mary, it would put Mary in precisely the same position that the doctrine of her mediation would, or that the True Devotion would. We belong to Mary as young children do to their mother, and we are utterly dependent on her. She does the housekeeping in the family of God. She administers the various graces which are equivalent to giving the innumerable cares that a mother lavishes on her children. Our Lord is the head and provides the elements of support which make family life possible, but he does it through the immediate agency of the mother.

The Adam and Eve parallelism with Jesus and Mary was taught from the first moment by the apostles. It is true that St Paul confines his references to Jesus as the New Adam. But to every hearer that would carry with it the thought of the New Eve. If it did not, then the brains of those early Christians were of a different sort to our own, because Adam and Eve are not merely successive thoughts; they are a single thought.

Then why did St Paul not name the New Eve as he did the New Adam? Because of the reverse with which the apostles and the early writers surrounded so many of the sacred things. Their special preoccupation was the bringing out in relief of the divine character and mission

of Jesus. Items which could be misunderstood in those purely pagan days, for example the Mass, the Eucharist, Our Lady, etc. were treated with that reserve.

The other great parallel placed before the early Christians to aid them to understand their relation to Christ and to each other was the comparison of the Church to the human body. Christ is the head of the Mystical Body and we are its members. The variety of roles is almost infinite, but one law governs all; dependence on Christ from whom flows the divine life which gives value to our acts. As in the human body, each member depends on and supports the others; and even the divine head depends on his members.

Where did the ancients place Mary in relation to that image of the body? I would imagine that it was simply as Mother of the Body that they regarded her, just as they thought of her as mother of the head. The idea of likening her to some organ of the body as Our Lord is compared to the head seems to date from the Middle Ages. St Bernard assigned to her the role of neck in the Mystical Body, and in this others followed him. Many did not consider this image as sufficiently expressive of her co-operative influence and have compared her to the heart. But all these ideas work down to the same thing: the effort to find images which would worthily show forth her secondary, but essential, place in the life of the Church. And this brings us back again to the New Eve doctrine, which is perhaps the most striking of all in its implications.

We call Mary the Mediatrix of All Graces. Jesus is the great Mediator or Accomplisher of Salvation. But his design has included Mary as his helpmate, although she is as nothing compared to him. He has incorporated her in his redemptive mission from beginning to end.

She has not any jurisdiction independent of his; she is totally dependent on him. But neither is she a mere mechanism; she is a responsible co-operator with his will. She fulfils faithfully the office which he has committed to her. Subject to him, she is also most perfectly united to him. She is fully mother; everything connected with the children of God is placed under her influence. She administers the divine life to them, and by her incessant maternal care she causes them to grow up in Christ. Her hand is on every item of the Christian life, every grace, prayer, duty.

That is her function. There she is as God intended her to be. Some, finding it hard to understand why 'He who is mighty has done those great things to her' (Lk 1:49), are unwilling to acquiesce. They prefer to leave her out of their philosophy. They forget that they must be amenable to God's philosophy. To them we could address a phrase of St Augustine: 'You run well, but you are off the road. Where will you get to in the end?'

On the degree to which we adapt ourselves to that arrangement of God will largely depend our life's work. Obviously then our first effort must be to seek to understand the greatness to which Mary has been appointed, and here the inspired treatise of de Montfort will be invaluable to us.

We must respond with some degree of adequacy to her mother-love. The True Devotion proposes a method. It is based on the principle that as we are placed by God in a relation to Mary which is equivalent to, but much more intense than, that of very young children towards their mother, we must behave to her accordingly. She gives to us everything she has. So we must give to her everything that we have. As we do not love or pray or work without

her help, we must try to realise this fact intellectually, so that specifically at some times, and indefinitely at all times, we will acknowledge her influence.

Some persons are held back from the True Devotion by the supposition that it requires them to address the bulk of their prayers to Mary. But the True Devotion is a state and not any particular prayers. Provided that Mary's sway over us is appreciated and occasionally brought to mind with deliberate advertence, we are free to direct our prayers where we will. It is that appreciation which is the pivotal element in the True Devotion.

De Montfort attaches large promises to the worthy practice of the Devotion. It would be nothing less than a supreme tragedy if he were to be imagined as exaggerating, because he does not exaggerate in the slightest way. The soul that Mary is enabled really to mother grows beneath her touch.

The Medal Called Miraculous

It is realised that the Medal of the Immaculate Conception, popularly styled the Miraculous Medal, was strikingly associated with the beginnings of the Legion. But many may not be aware of the fact that it was also entwined with what I may call the roots or pre-history of the Legion. The statue which formed the centre of the first meeting of the Legion, and which is now contained in a showcase at Concilium headquarters, was of the Miraculous Medal model. It belonged to a little society called the Guild of the Immaculate Conception – which was engaged in that direct defence of the Faith which we call anti-proselytism. Innumerable Protestant agencies had set themselves to the attempt to draw the poor of Ireland from Catholicism by crude methods based on the 'buying' of them in one form or another.

One of those agencies operated in the premises No 6½ Whitefriar Street, Dublin, using the medium of free food conditional on attendance at a service. The Guild of the

Immaculate Conception was started by a shoemaker, J.J. Gabbett, to induce the victims of 6½ Whitefriar Street not to attend there and at the same time to provide for their necessities. The statue had been purchased by Gabbett out of a fund contributed by girls only. The subscription was one penny each. No man was permitted to contribute!

After some years the guild ceased, its purposes being otherwise provided for. Its modest effects, including the statue, came to Myra House and each item was destined to play a part in the history of the Legion. On the fateful first evening of the Legion's life the statue was used as the centre-point of the Legion altar. Those first members were urged to have devotion to the Miraculous Medal and to utilise it in their contacts. Likewise they were recommended to use the invocation of the Medal: 'Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.'

These injunctions were heeded. The legionaries did thus rely upon the medal, so that at a later date, when the Catena became a part of the legionary obligation, the invocation more or less automatically took its place in it.

The Vexillum was not part of the original equipment. When the first model of it was produced it was of silver and handmade. Its design was precisely as you see it today, with the exception that the oval did not depict the Miraculous Medal but a conventional Immaculate Conception. The original is now preserved in the showcase already referred to. It might be expected that this design would harden into tradition and as such be difficult to alter. But no. When the Vexillum was mass-produced for use by the praesidia, the oval, both front and reverse switched back to starting point. It was made the Miraculous Medal.

Sensational Anniversaries

Not long afterwards, a sensational occurrence once again made this pointing to a bond between the medal and the Legion. At the centenary moment of the medal, that is precisely 100 years after Our Lady had appeared to Catherine Labouré, the audience began with Cardinal Verdier, the Archbishop of Paris, in which was discussed the founding of the Legion in France. As the Church liturgy shows, God has regard to anniversaries and presumably in a special way to centenaries. So here would seem to be a definite linking of the Apparition of 1830 with the Legion.

There was more to come. Shortly after the above date in 1930, the Rev. Dr Joseph P. Donovan, CM came to Paris to attend a Chapter of his Congregation. While there, he visited his compatriot, the Rev. Sister M. Reeves, in the Rue du Bac. She gave him a copy of the Legion handbook and some other items of Legion literature and suggested to him that he try to start the Legion in the USA where she suggested it was much needed. He read the handbook at once. We are told what his reactions were. He said: 'If this is true, then it is the society that we have long been waiting for.' Immediately he set out for Dublin to investigate. He was so impressed by what he found that on his return to America he wrote the celebrated article which started the Legion there. The day on which the first praesidium began was the 27 November 1931. That day is the Feast of the Miraculous Medal. Let it be explained that this date was not deliberately selected by the originators of that praesidium; they did not advert to the coincidence. Therefore once again we seem to be witnessing a supernatural pointing to the facts that it was on the 1930 feast that the Rev. Sister Reeves first heard of the Legion, and that it was in the Convent of

the Miraculous Medal that she subsequently interested Dr Donovan, a fellow member of the Vincentian (Lazarist) Congregation.

Those intriguing events were described in *Maria Legionis*, July 1945, pp. 8 and 9. To suggest that all of these many coincidences represented the operation of chance would be straining the strings of coincidence unduly.

Origin of the Medal

Now let us go back to the origin of the medal itself. This was at the time when the long disputation over the Immaculate Conception was drawing to its formal end; that is towards the definition of the doctrine. On the Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent 1830 in the Convent of the Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul, Rue du Bac, Paris, Catherine Labouré had a vision of Our Blessed Lady who instructed her to have a medal made after a pattern which she minutely described to the sister. 'Those who wear that medal when it is indulgenced,' then declared Our Lady, 'will receive great graces, especially if they wear it round their necks. Graces will be abundant for those who have confidence.'

Catherine communicated the details to her Spiritual Director, Père Aladel. He watched her very carefully after that with a view to detecting any instability in her or any inconsistency in her story. When he had satisfied himself, he imparted the circumstances to the Archbishop of Paris Msgr de Quélen. This was at the beginning of 1832. The archbishop's judgement was that the question of the medal could be viewed apart from the question of the authenticity of the apparition, and that there was nothing inconsistent with the Faith in the proposed design. He gave permission for the making of the medal.

On 30 June 1832, two thousand medals were delivered to Père Aladel. Some of them he at once gave to the archbishop who resolved to put to the severest test the alleged promise that great graces would follow from the use of the medal. At that time the Archbishop of Malines, Msgr de Pradt, was in open warfare with the Church and appeared to be quite hardened. Msgr de Quélen judged that this would represent a test case. So he went to Msgr de Pradt with the medal, but was refused admittance – only to be sent for immediately afterwards. The sequel was a complete triumph; Msgr de Pradt was reconciled to the Church.

The Archbishop of Paris, though astounded, was not yet satisfied. He put the medal to other exacting tests, and he declared that he had never given it without the happiest results. Also he investigated cases where it had achieved successes through other hands than his own. As a consequence he was completely convinced as to its efficacy.

The medal took on like wildfire. In Naples the king caused one million of them to be distributed during an outbreak of cholera there. The Pope himself gave it out to many.

In 1836 a Diocesan Enquiry into the circumstances of the Apparition and Medal was held in Paris. As a result of it the medal was approved. Likewise sanctioned were images and statues of the Blessed Virgin which would represent the Apparition of 1830. Then on 1 January 1839, the Diocese of Paris was consecrated to the Immaculate Conception. The widespread use of the medal unquestionably gave stress to the doctrine itself and thus may have had a bearing on the important step which soon followed, i.e. that of 1854 when Pius IX

declared the Immaculate Conception to be a dogma of the Faith. Then in 1858 followed Lourdes, which at one stroke confirmed the Immaculate Conception and the action of the Pope in defining it.

The Medal and The Legion

The use of the medal soon became general throughout the world. The victories of grace which attended it were so many and so striking that by universal acclaim the name 'Miraculous Medal' was bestowed on it. The Legion's adoption of it in 1921 was no case of a new discovery; the Legion was simply tuning in to a general belief in the power of the medal.

The medal has continued in vigorous use among legionaries. This fact suggests the influence of grace. In the first place if it had been no more than an initial enthusiasm or a fad, it would not have remained in such vogue. This was all the more the case as the legionaries had to face a certain amount of mockery on its account. One wit invented the name: 'Miraculous Meddlers' for them.

Secondly – and this has much importance – there has been for several years past a campaign against the medal and like things. There has been in many circles the imputation that they are primitive and not a little superstitious. Broadly speaking this has been among those who have been seeking to bring Protestants into the Church in bulk, but who do not seem to be interested in individual conversions. Some indeed go so far as to repudiate the idea of seeking those individual conversions as being an obstacle to a mass conversion! So far they have gained neither the individual nor the bulk conversions.

This school of thought has no patience whatever with the medal. They see it as an exercise in superstition and

apart from this as a demonstration of excessive devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Their idea is that she is a barrier to the entry of Protestants and therefore that there should be no emphasis on that barrier. They tone her down. They seem to talk of her only to depreciate what they call 'excesses'. They regard the Marian sacramentals (scapulars, medals etc.) as relics of a simpler, bygone age which should be brought up-to-date, by which they mean abolished.

Those minimisers have a high sounding phrase on their lips: 'Every doctrine must be rethought in order to bring it into line with modern requirements.' Of course within due limits there is correctness in this. Everything in the Christian doctrine must be ever meditated on for the purpose of drawing fresh lights from it. But this is a totally different thing from a casting of everything into the melting-pot. Such would mean that the careful thought and growth of the time honoured formulae and instruments of grace are to be abruptly replaced with new ones to which those outside the Church will not object! Theology is to become a branch of tactics!

To this process of making things approvable to the non-Catholics, Our Lady is to be subjected. Nothing about her need be accepted but what has been formally defined! And the extraordinary statement proceeds from certain quarters that the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption were defined *inopportunistly* – as if when talking of the operation of the Holy Ghost there is any difference between 'inopportunist' and 'incorrect'.

The formal teachings of the popes on the subject of Mary's place in grace are rudely put aside by that section on the grounds that they are not *ex cathedra*. But this disregard of the *magisterium* or ordinary teaching authority of the Church would lay waste the Catholic Church as we know it.

One exponent of this new school of thinking tells us that the 'revival of theology in 1950' has knocked the bottom from under all that discussion about Our Lady's mediation!

Here I have to repeat what has already been said: that the chief and real reason why the medals and scapulars are objected to is that they are expressions of the popular belief in Mary's influential role, and that they safeguard and foster that belief.

Contemplating those minimisers one is struck by the fact that the Legion is really the very opposite to them. And that section has not been slow in perceiving the fact and in loading the Legion with their contempt. It is old fashioned, benighted, and it must be completely reformed! It is strange that such minds would wish to keep even the name of the Legion in existence, but many of them do. In spite of themselves they recognise that there is a power in it. But they want to reform it. They say that this would only be a matter of changing its clothes. We say it is a matter of such drastic alteration as would leave behind nothing of the essential of the Legion of Mary.

Our Lady is Defender of the Faith

Of course Our Blessed Lady is a barrier to those who will not believe in her. In that sense she *is* keeping the unbelievers out. But likewise she is keeping us in. Obviously, if the main barriers and tests of belief are done away with then there is no longer any Catholic Church. If people come in without accepting Mary and all that she stands for, it is not really into the Catholic Church that they come, but into a Church of their own imagining, equivalent to a High Anglican or High Lutheran one.

The position is that Our Lady is fulfilling her old role of defender of the Faith. It is a commission entrusted to her by God very long ago: 'I will set enmities between Satan and the woman.' She has always been the test of orthodox doctrine. Holding on to her we are safe.

Those anti-traditionalists would not admit that they want to omit Mary. They say they only want to remove the non-essentials, the excrescences, and the superstitious elements which have like barnacles attached themselves to devotion to her! But we have seen what this boils down to. Those same persons have told us that we need only accept in regard to her what was prescribed in 431, 1854 and 1950. This would mean that we would be left without guidance in respect of her role in the Catholic dispensation; the extent of the part played by her in relation to the soul is to be determined by the individual! But if it is indeed to be left optional, why has a campaign been waged in many places towards the abolition of the Rosary and the Legion altar in praesidium meetings! It will be agreed that this campaign does not allow much freedom! Moreover, it is uncomfortably like similar type of action taken by the Reformation 500 years ago.

It is history that Luther, Calvin and the other leaders of the Reformation, while denying to Our Lady any real role in the realm of grace, retained a sort of devotion to her. But their successors made short work of her. Full Protestantism came in and in due course proceeded to their denial of the Incarnation itself.

But is it not possible for one to be completely correct in one's Marian doctrine and at the same time to reject such Marian items as her medals and scapulars?

In the first place I would suggest that there would be in that rejection a great laceration of the ordinary Catholic

outlook which has through the centuries received those things and believed in them as aids.

Secondly it would strike hard at much else of the traditional usage of the Church. For into that category of the medals etc. would also have to go such items as the crucifix, statues, pictures, holy water, the rosary, relics, shrines and a multitude of devotional practices which have represented a growth endorsed by the Church, its popes and saints, and by the evidence of many wonders worked. Unquestionably a successful attack on the Miraculous Medal would place all those other things in peril because they are akin.

Here is an instance which would typify a whole section. A Reverend Mother wished to do away with all the statues in her chapel. She did not dare to knock them to pieces, so she placed them in a row outside on the footpath. Nobody would take them as they were too big for their houses. Eventually the OFM Fathers rescued them lest they be taken away in the refuge wagon.

Many of the newer churches have not a single Marian item in them.

Our minds are forced back to the iconoclasts, the Reformers and the various heresies of the past.

By hitting at the medals and other sacramentals it is possible to make ordinary people nervous about devotion to Mary in general. Where is one to stop? What is an extravagance? But those persons who cast her into improper shade are playing a deadly game as history so emphatically tells. Denial of Mary leads inevitably to the denial of the Incarnation.

A vital fact which has to be taken count of is that all those devotional items and practices cater for a side of our human nature. It is a help to us to be able to pin

our faith to something visible. The Incarnation and the whole sacramental system of the Church show that God himself has taken this element in human nature into the Christian Plan. The sacraments are signs of Christ's action. The Marian sacramentals signify Mary's intervention. It is interesting to observe that those people who spurn these aids and reminders which are based on real faith are commonly found to be materialistically minded or else addicted to idols and charms which are based on real superstition.

A Courageous Adventure

In the hands of legionaries, the Miraculous Medal has demonstrated its efficacy in ways that cannot be denied, so many and so remarkable have they been. Its effective use in an unexpected field is worth recounting. Approach was planned to an extensive area where the inhabitants were exclusively non-Catholic and where there was no priest or church. The people had the reputation of such hostility to Catholicism that it was universally accepted that they would use physical violence towards any who would come to them in the name of the Church. Undeterred the legionaries went to the territory and spoke to the people individually asking to be permitted to explain the Catholic faith. In almost every case this opportunity was granted. The legionaries did not follow a policy of reserve in regard to Our Lady. On the contrary they sought to explain the fullness of her position. Incidentally they offered the Miraculous Medal which gave admirable opportunity to explain Our Lady. It was readily accepted and subsequently worn. This is an astounding circumstance for Our Lady had been alleged to be a focus point of the hatred of the Church. Let me add that in the entire extensive operation

carried out by nine priests and 88 legionaries, hardly anything but a kind reception was experienced. And there was no case of physical molestation.

Legionaries must not let themselves be caught up in any of these 'minimising' tendencies whether those are directed against the Blessed Virgin herself or against those holy things which she uses as means of manifesting her power; and which at the same time are her panoply, which is to say her armour of defence. This is in the sense that if these are pierced then the next onslaught is against her own person.

So let us continue to believe in the Miraculous Medal and to utilise it. It bids us to think of Our Lady in many important ways. It is a representation of her Immaculate Conception, of her motherhood of grace and of her company with us in our apostolic missions. We go confidently into the worst situations and to the ultra-difficult people. Is it not a thought compelling fact that it has been the Legion which has taken the chief part in the approaching of non-Catholics for the purpose of converting them? One would imagine that the Legion, by reason of its name and pronounced devotion to Mary, would be the least fitted to secure success in that field. The contrary has been the case. Conversions have been realised in great numbers. In many of those conversions the medal has played an initiating part.

It is to be noted, therefore, that Mary not only preserves the integrity of the Faith, but also is the giver of the Faith as many of her titles testify.

The Cenacle

It is in the order of necessity that we should have a reasonably complete picture in our minds of the Holy Ones with whom we hope to spend our eternity and who are now shepherding us along our difficult road. Of course I speak of completeness in a relative sense, because it would be impossible for us to know enough about Jesus and Mary. But we must strike towards such knowledge as is to be had. Here I mean more than a possession of the doctrinal truths which the Church teaches us. I add on the meditations and speculations of the religious writers. It would be incorrect to regard this material as mere pious guesswork. It would always possess some foundation of reasonableness and it can play a great part in turning a doctrine into a person. Unless Jesus and Mary are vivid to us as persons it will be hard to love them in a full sense. They were real flesh and blood individuals who lived the common life in a known place at a certain epoch. We must have an idea of the sort of life it was and of the things they moved among and were interested in. Detailed knowledge helps devotion.

In this process we can deduce plenty that we do not know authoritatively. The Jews were a conservative people. Rule and custom shaped their behaviour down into minute detail. Jesus and Mary would be found conforming faithfully to that way of life. By putting together that varied assortment of information we create a living and reasonably justified picture of them. When thought has made this familiar to us, Jesus and Mary are brought to a new dimension in our minds. They become as distinct and close to us as our own beloved departed ones whom we know so intimately.

This effort to depict for ourselves the manner of life of Jesus and Mary must take in their native land and their period of history. To the Jews their country was inextricably entwined with their religion. Its history and usages were really part of their religion. For Jesus and Mary this was uniquely the case. Those things were not merely a stage or setting for them, which in itself would be important, but actually pointed to them and led to them. The Old Testament is full of items which are types and images and prophecies of them. And we may be sure that this divine pointing goes into a depth of detail which will never be fully probed on this side of eternity, even though new lights are constantly being gained.

So we must read up and think about the Holy Land itself. Jesus must have moved over its entire surface. Unquestionably he loved, with every fibre of his being, that territory which his Father had assigned to the Chosen People as their home. So we should in imagination follow in his footsteps and try to look on its places and landmarks with his sentiments, as St Paul urges us to do in all matters.

These remarks, intended to be introductory, have probably led you to expect a travelogue on the Holy Land.

But my purpose is to concentrate your attention on a tiny fraction of that area, no more possibly than an acre in extent; not a city but only a house. It no longer exists. Its history was short. Yet it will forever shine with lustre in the Christian annals. It is known to us as the Cenacle or upper room in Jerusalem in which the Last Supper took place.

The Pasch, established when the Jews were about to leave Egypt, foreshadowed the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Our Lord was now about to celebrate his own final Pasch, which would turn that shadow into substance. As a preliminary he gave a remarkable command to his two favourite apostles. It is quite evidently based on a looking into the future and the incorporation into his plan of what he saw.

The Gospel of St Luke (22:8-14) speaks as follows: 'Jesus sent Peter and John, saying: "Go and prepare for us the Pasch that we may eat." But they said: "Where wilt thou that we prepare?" And he said to them: "Behold as you go into the city, there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him into the house where he entereth in. And you shall say to the good man of the house: The Master saith to thee: Where is the guest chamber where I may eat the Pasch with my disciples? And he will show you a large dining-room furnished. And there prepare." And they going, found as he said to them and made ready the Pasch. And when the hour was come, he sat down and the Twelve Apostles with him.'

That opened the stupendous event which we call the Last Supper. The institution of the Eucharist took place. The final act of Redemption began.

The word 'Cenacle' derives from the Latin *cenare*, meaning to have supper. The Cenacle was only one room

of a house. The particular home was on Mount Sion, a name which has entered into a title familiar to us: Our Lady of Sion.

We see from the Acts of the Apostles (1:13) that the apostles had continued to live in that house after Holy Thursday night, through the desolation of Friday and Saturday and on to Ascension Thursday. It was to there that they returned immediately after they saw Jesus ascent from Mount Olivet. The Acts describe the Cenacle as the abode of the apostles and speak of it as a Sabbath day's journey from Mount Olivet. This would be three quarters of a mile to the city all and the further distance to the centre of the city where the house stood.

Who came back? All those who had seen Our Lord depart: the apostles, the men and women disciples and Mary – to the number of 120. This band of fervent believers constituted the Church of the moment. It was a tragically small number considering the many who had listened enthusiastically to the discourses of Jesus, who had seen the wonders he worked, and had perhaps benefited by them.

We must try to bring that scene to life through our imagination. Those people were not just a crowd. They were the first Christians, our spiritual ancestors. Did they march back as a body? Probably not. Such a challenging gesture would seem to belong to the Pentecostal period. But neither were they dismayed and shivering with fear as they were when the Shepherd had been struck. They had seen enough to stimulate them on the human plane. So we must conceive them as performing that purposeful journey in small groups and definitely in a state of exhilaration. They were going back to await the Paraclete. His coming was to be some sort of prodigious happening, on a par

with the Resurrection and the Ascension, but apparently in another order. The Holy Spirit would descend and make everything different. From the way in which Jesus had spoken about it, it was to be a manifestation, one which would inaugurate a new era. They had no doubts as to the certainty of it. Everything the Lord had promised had come to pass. This would too. They went back to fulfil his instruction that they were to prepare for it.

The first business in the Cenacle was the election of one to take the place of the poor prevaricator, Judas. This was done by picking two of the disciples and then casting lots. The choice fell on Matthias who was then numbered among the twelve.

The Lord had said that they must remain in the city till the Power from on high would come on them (Lk 24:49). So we are led to conclude that they stayed in the house.

We are told that they persevered with one mind in prayer. This suggests that they observed a strict retreat. The number of persons in question would seem to us to be too large to permit all sleeping in the house itself. So we might think that many of them went to their own homes at night. Actually there would be no necessity for this, having regard to the simple sleeping needs of the Jews. A space under cover sufficient to lie down, a blanket – that was all that was required. So that if the retreat were what would nowadays be called an ‘enclosed’ one, there would be no trouble providing in the premises for the total number. Pius XI terms it a memorable retreat, the forerunner and model of all retreats, held in the presence of the Mother of God, which polished and perfected the Church for its apostolic work.

Altars were set up. St Peter said the first Mass, as we are assured by St Proclus, the Patriarch of Constantinople and

Hesychius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Thus the same place that saw the emergence of the Eucharist, the anticipated Mass, housed the first ordinary Mass. This thrilling detail shows the partiality of God for order. Those two events, united in his thought, are brought to pass in the one spot.

Nor did that vital sequence terminate its history. There was more to come. For sheer importance that house would rank with that other one in Nazareth. Their roles were kindred. Jesus took flesh in that of Nazareth and his Mystical Body was cradled in the Cenacle. A little house was big enough for Jesus and his parents. A mansion was required for his larger family.

Let us survey that mansion. We should be interested in the details; what took place there has laid its impress on the life of every man. It is declared to have been white. The premises were obviously magnificent, for the supper-room was 50 feet by 30, spacious enough to hold not less than 120. This indicates sufficiently the status of its owner. It was a noble room, suitably and probably richly furnished, as I will seek to show. It opened on to a terrace which would have a staircase of its own allowing access from the outside without having to go through the house.

That sort of room, but of course not of that size, would be a recognised feature of every comfortable home. It would fulfil such purposes as the reception and entertainment of guests, the celebration of feasts, the saying of prayers, the family meals, the laying out of the dead.

A tradition ascribes its ownership to Joseph of Arimathea. He was a very wealthy man, which is the reason why I have suggested that the premises were richly furnished. The gospel seems to hint the same. Always restrained in its descriptions, it is careful to say that the Cenacle was 'furnished'.

Let me add that it would be highly fitting that Joseph, who was a disciple and who gave his own tomb to receive Our Lord's body, should likewise give his home for the Last Supper, for the first Masses, for the descent of the Holy Spirit and after that to be the centre of the Christian life and the seat of government. O happy Joseph of Arimathea!

Perhaps a pleasing legend might be mentioned: that Joseph of Arimathea was that rich young man spoken of in the gospel (Mt 19:21-22) who was called by Jesus, apparently to the fullness of apostleship, but who had not the courage to cast aside everything because 'he had great possessions'. An air of tragedy surrounds that rich man in our thoughts, so that it would be consoling to think of him as having afterwards been given such a favoured part.

The house was a conspicuous one, almost a landmark as will later appear. When did Our Lord's eyes first rest on it? That forms interesting conjecture. Would he, during those three mysterious days when he was 'lost' in Jerusalem, have gone there to inspect the house which was destined to be in the heart of his future plans?

Such were the surroundings in which the disciples waited for the fulfilment of the great promise. And the time? Just as the Passover was the time for Our Lord to suffer, for he was the real Pascal Lamb, so the Pentecost was a meaningful feast for the Jews. It commemorated the dread drama of Mount Sinai where, long centuries before, the Old Law was given to the people of Israel through Moses. Then it was in a storm, lightning raging, and the mountain like a furnace with smoke billowing heavenwards.

There is a striking of the same note in the formal inauguration of the New Covenant, but milder, sweeter.

The disciples were all together in that place. And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a mighty wind blowing and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and they began to speak with divers tongues according as the Holy Spirit gave them to speak (Acts 2:1-4).

The expression 'parted tongues' seems to indicate that they saw a fiery source dividing itself into separate tongues. This might have accomplished itself at some height, but one constant tradition has it that the Holy Spirit came as a globe of fire upon the Blessed Virgin who was in the centre of the throng, then parting into tongues to sit upon the others. There would be a suitability about this having regard to the eminence of the role assigned to Mary as Spouse of the Holy Spirit, Mother and Mediatrix. The drastic transformation effected in the disciples is known to you. It does not form part of my present tale.

The immediate result of the New Power was the flood of converts. Two sermons brought in 8,000. This increase rendered the Cenacle inadequate. So they assembled in houses in different parts of the city. There according to the Acts (2:42), they persevered in the doctrine of the apostles and in the communication of the breaking of bread (that is Mass and Holy Communion) and in prayers. But the Cenacle retained its primary place. It was the first See of Peter. It was the primitive Vatican. From there Peter directed the administration of the Church. He exercised the authority of Jesus Christ. He solved doubts. He proclaimed infallibly.

From the Jewish custom in regard to meetings for deliberative purposes, we can tell the setting of that

group of 120 persons. St Peter is the presiding person, not Our Lady. Her office was not and is not, that of administrative head. She is mother. She does not preach or command. But she would be honourably placed in the assembly which would be arranged in circular form, all facing towards the centre. The disciples occupy one half-circle. Our Lady is in the middle, the men on one side of her and women on the other. The apostles form the other half-circle; St Peter in the middle of them, directly faces Our Blessed Lady. The setting reminds one a little of our Congress method or of the recommendation for Patrician meetings.

Historians say that St John's house was near the Cenacle but separate. Perhaps it was some sort of lodge or outhouse of the mansion itself, put at the disposal of St John and the Mother of God by Joseph of Arimathea. Strange that her life should thus repeat itself! As a girl she had lived adjacent to the Temple which she served. Now again she lived beside the centre of religious worship aiding the Church. At this time she was about 48 years of age.

Mary was left on earth after her son's Ascension because she had to nourish and nurse the Mystical Body of her son as she had his physical body. Could she not have done this from Heaven as she does today? No, for there was a human mothering job to be done. She had to be the centre point of affection, the one living witness of the early and vital happenings, the main source of information for the Evangelists, the pillar of faith and wisdom.

Moreover it is the divine principle that one begins on earth what one continues in Heaven. To be our perfect mother in Heaven, she had to fulfil that function over men on earth; so that this root would merge into its heavenly flowering.

It would be quite incorrect to imagine Mary at that stage as removed from people, mourning over the past and moping for Heaven, or in a state of contemplation bordering on ecstasy. No, that would not be the behaviour of a mother with children, of the Strong Woman of the Bible. Rather must we represent her as we saw her at Cana that is moving among the faithful, a woman with a job, every inch of her on duty, her eyes taking in everything, not supplanting others in their employments but discreetly supplementing, filling in gaps, encouraging, strengthening.

Though she behaved towards St Peter as one of his sheep, and was the mainstay of his authority, we may be certain that in private he was but her child, leaning on her, needing just what she was able to give him.

At that time there were 480 synagogues in the city. Lost among them the Cenacle escaped observation and hurt at the hands of the Jews. Later, in AD 70, when the Romans besieged and destroyed Jerusalem, their main attack was on the north. The centre of the city, where the Cenacle stood, did not suffer so much. After that the Christians, having nothing more to fear from the Jews, transformed the edifice into a church. Later, when Adrian completely levelled the city, the Cenacle was the only building left standing, according to the testimony of St Epiphanius.

Most likely there is a symbolism in that. Just as Our Lady of Sion stood erect amid the wreckage of Calvary, so everything else had been overturned. And out of each pile of ruins there was to be a renewal of life far surpassing what had been.

The Rosary Is Irreplaceable

Aggiornamento is the cry of the day. It is intended to mean a bringing up to date, a renewal of youth. It has been given to us as a watchword by that revered man, Pope John XXIII. But as interpreted by a hot-headed section among us, it has been given meanings which were not intended. For instance we are to change for the sake of change! The past is primitive – so overboard with it! Yesterday is old! Revolution is the thing!

Such talk as that would be folly and to put it into practice would be madness. For we stand on the past in every sense. If the past growth of our bodies were to be cancelled out, we would not be here at all. If our mental development was erased, we would be left lower even than the animals, because we would be unsupported even by instinct. Blot out our inheritance of ideas and man would be back in the jungle contending with the wild beasts and making ready to start again the slow climb to knowledge and civilisation. This applies not only in

general but in detail. We truly stand on the shoulders of the past.

We must always move forward. To be progressive is a duty. We must fulfil it in a sensible way. Not all that glitters is gold; nor is all that is new good. While plunging adventurously into the unfamiliar and unknown, we must maintain touch with what we have.

In the first place our existing knowledge is the only test of the new. Without experience how can we even judge what we can safely eat?

In the second place we may have to return to the old. To lay aside the present prematurely might mean being left without anything. As exemplifying the wisdom of the world in this regard, see the careful little steps being made towards putting man on the moon. As a culmination of that orderly, reasonable process it is certain that one day man will take possession of that portion of Christ's domain and come back here to render an account.

So I presume to add on to the watchword of that noble man John: While reaching out to the alluring future keep one hand tightly on what we have. Let us ascend as we would climb a stairs one step at a time. Seek to evolve methodically; avoid revolution.

This preamble leads up to my topic which is the Rosary. Why must I approach it with those words of caution and warning? It is because the Rosary has become a victim of the false *aggiornamento*. Outside the Legion, for we have not felt it, there is a campaign against the Rosary, suggestions that it be abandoned. Actually this has been put into effect in many places. A gospel phrase against vain repetition is improperly applied to it, as if to repeat is always vain and as if no prayer is to be repeated! If this argument were to be insisted upon would it be right to say

a prayer even twice? Our Lord in teaching the Pater Noster certainly meant it to be repeated often.

Another affectation is that the Rosary is a prayer for ignorant people and that as these are days of enlightenment there is no room for the Rosary. I will deal with this later.

Another attack, which is a justified one, is caused by the manner of saying the Rosary. Frequently it is said too rapidly. Agreed! Such can truly be an unedifying performance. Incidentally the more the Rosary is rushed, the longer it seems to be.

It is a pity and an anomaly that the Rosary having established itself as a special communal prayer, should be abused in such a way as to menace its existence. We cannot afford to be deprived of one of the few communal prayers which we have.

The remedy is obvious. The Rosary should be recited reverently. What difficulty is there in the way of this? In the main the Legion says the Rosary properly; so why not everyone else?

The Rosary is not the only prayer which is open to that same objection. Every prayer tends to be said at a speed which would not be used in conversation and presumably this means that it is being said too fast. If so it can be unedifying and disrespectful to the person to whom it is addressed.

Another objection sometimes heard is what we might call a mathematical one, i.e. that it is not right to give only one Pater to God and ten Aves to Mary – as if that proportion meant the amount of attention given to the respective persons. Presumably this would get nothing out of the Rosary. This would be an absurd point of view.

Every word of the Rosary is a prayer to God. We pray to God when we do anything for God. Our daily work

is done for him although it may be of a character which does not admit of giving him one thought directly. It would be wrong to pray to him if it interfered with the proper doing of that work. Likewise it would be wrong to pray to God directly if at the moment he wanted us to address ourselves to Mary. If we refuse to address ourselves at all to Mary on the grounds that to do so is to take away from God that would be incorrect. It might be seriously incorrect even heretical.

In the first place, when giving to Mary we give to God because attention to her is definitely his will. In the second place a refusal to pray to her indicates that we do not understand Catholic doctrine in which Mary has so significant a place, one entitling her to a part in our worship. It would be wrong if we were to say 'I go direct to God. I have no need of Jesus.' It would be similarly wrong in a minor key to say the same of Mary: 'I have no need to go to her.'

There is more in prayer than a presentation to God of our praises, thanks, petitions. Prayer has to be an attitude, a raising of the mind to God and not exclusively a matter of words. Prayer has also to be an expression of our belief. Our worship has to take in and acknowledge all that has been done for us and by whom. It must likewise serve the purpose of constantly reminding us of those different considerations. In a word our prayer is in part a little catechism lesson for ourselves. This means that our prayers taken all together should be teaching us the Christian mysteries as well as declaring our belief in them.

Every prayer when backed by correct faith is an act of worship of God. But not every prayer is an expression of doctrine. For example the Psalms are hymns to God and special inasmuch as they are the voice of the Church.

This is emphasised to legionaries in connection with praetorian and adjutorian membership. But it could not be contended that Psalms either teach us the Catholic doctrines or express those doctrines. How could they? They are taken from the Old Testament and they are prior to the coming of Our Lord. If taken by themselves how much of the Catechism would they teach us?

The same could be said of certain other forms of prayer but it could not be said of our present subject, the Rosary. The Rosary is a prayer of particular value from that point of view. It is an instruction in Christian doctrine as it was originally designed to be. Indeed it is difficult to imagine how this purpose could be better fulfilled without asking too much of the individual or putting a burden on the mind. Never let us forget that prayer must be essentially a simple exercise. If it is not, it will not be resorted to. We should also be hesitant about differentiating as between prayer for simple persons and for an alleged intellectual élite. In the spiritual order those roles are often totally reversed. In my own time I have found many intellectuals without the slightest spiritual sense in them.

Moreover the Rosary having taught us the Christian details and subsequently reminded us of them, then reflects them all to God again as our worship, coupled with our love, our praise, our thanks and our petitions; all of which forms a comprehensive and invaluable approach to God. Perhaps for certain persons the Rosary is surpassed by other forms of prayer, for instance the Divine Office in the case of priests for whom it is imperative. But we would want to be sure in recommending the Psalms that certain other educative and devotional ingredients (including Our Blessed Lady) are otherwise adequately provided for, because the Psalms do not contain those elements.

The Legion in its praetorian and adjutorian membership provides both the Rosary and the Psalms, basing the latter on the fact that they are the official voice of the Mystical Body. But I would venture to say that to present the Psalms to the ordinary people without a foundation would be a mistake.

Part of the foundation which the Rosary infallibly supplies is Our Blessed Lady. It mixes her up with the Holy Trinity and with Our Lord, and with all the circumstances of his life. And that is what God himself has done. He mixes her up with everything. The Rosary counteracts any tendency to relegate her to a sub-compartment in the Christian life. The Rosary casts a comprehensive picture on the mind. It shows the purpose of Redemption and all its phases from beginning to end. It does not show Jesus alone as if no one else counted, but gives the settings and circumstances and persons, turning all into a vivid image, a living drama. And all fashioned into a prayer.

In that process of Redemption from beginning to end, Mary played a vital part, such that all who benefitted by it must not separate her from it. She must figure prominently in the tribute of gratitude which we offer to Heaven. All generations must call her 'blessed'.

That brings me to something which is really terribly serious. How much of that hostile attitude towards the Rosary is really due to a lack of conviction in regard to Mary's role? If people think her to be no more than a trimming then the Rosary would seem to them to be a grave excess and we are supposed to get rid of excesses and extravagances. But Mary is no mere ornament or sentiment in the Christian religion. Her position is unique. Whatever room for error or temptation against her may have existed before 21 November 1964 there is

no excuse today. The *De Ecclesia* decree has promulgated as *de fide*; that is as something which must be received by Catholics as part of their faith; that she has an essential part in all the Christian mysteries. She is styled Mother of the Church and of every soul in the whole world. She is our Advocate. She is the Co-worker in salvation. She is our Helper from the cradle to the grave. She is the Mediatrix of All Graces. She is to be explained to all those outside the Church. Being their mother they must be told her story and her function as their mother. This new promulgation should be meekly and gladly accepted by those whose objection to the Rosary has been that it makes Mary too prominent in our worship.

The Rosary was established about the year 1200 and it took on from the first minute. It was proposed to people and they were encouraged to use it. It proved itself to have an affinity for the people. Ever since it has been intertwined with Catholic life. It has been prominent in devotional literature; an element in the lives of the holy ones of the Church; the subject of the teachings of the Popes and the Doctors. The Rosary has been carried by Our Lady in many of the accepted apparitions. It has entered into many of the recorded miraculous events, some of which have saved the world. It is believed to have been responsible for innumerable favours. I wonder has there been any saint since the thirteenth century who did not use it.

The suggestion that only childlike minds avail of it is not justified. I could give you a list of remarkable people who have been devoted to the Rosary. Just take a few: Cardinal Newman was a great lover of it in spite of his Protestant origins. Marconi, Michelangelo, Mozart and Joseph Hayden were some of the geniuses who loved it

and who believed that it brought inspiration to them in their mental searchings.

It has been wrapped up with the Legion since its first day. It is the official prayer of the Legion, zealously propagated by it. It is shown as the border of the Tessera picture and carried by the legionaries in that picture. It is taken for granted as the ideal prayer for our meetings, supplying the right atmosphere in every way. Therefore it was no small shock at a certain stage in our progress to find that it did not figure in the Eastern Church, not even in that section of it called the Uniates which is united to the papacy. The Great Schism which separated the Eastern from the Western Church took place in the year 1054 - that is about 150 years before the introduction of the Rosary - so the Eastern Church could not carry it with them into their voluntary exile.

When the Legion began to grow among the Uniates and after that the Orthodox or non-united section, the problem of replacing the Rosary by some other prayer had to be faced up to. Why not, you might say, press the Rosary upon them? Well Rome had asked us not to do that, not to Latinise them. So we had to seek for a substitute. The efforts which were made in that direction have important bearing. The tale is too long to tell here. It suffices to say that every expedient was tried and failed until at last the Uniate Greeks helped us out by a compromise. I give you the solution.

They adopted a sort of Rosary which contained seven of our fifteen Mysteries. Each of those Mysteries was precluded by a little introduction or meditation followed by one Pater, three Aves and one Gloria. In other words, the whole contained seven preludes, seven Paters, twenty-one Aves and seven Glorias; these being followed by the

remainder of the Legion prayers. It has been a success. It produces the same conditions and tone as our Rosary, thus endorsing the Rosary and also showing how hard it is to replace it.

This is a profound lesson. It warns us that approach to the Rosary must be a respectful one and mindful of its ancient and universal position in the Church, and also of an undoubted psychological status which it has. It fits in with the human mind as indeed we would expect if both come from God. It suits the learned and the unlearned, and all types expect the proud. The beads themselves as a counting apparatus have an important mental value. They are jeered at in some quarters as being like an abacus on which a child is taught to count. Another kindred reproach is that it is like a Buddhist praying wheel! But just do away with the beads and it will be found that a powerful incentive towards saying the Rosary has gone. Try counting the prayers on the fingers; that sequel will be that a complete Rosary will not be said! I repeat: the Rosary is irreplaceable. We have only partially succeeded in that process by an expedient which goes very close to the Rosary itself.

Therefore those moderns, moved by false *Aggiornamento*, who want to supplant the Rosary, should take heed lest they be guilty of a mere vandalism. The latter is definable as a destroying without a thought as to what is thereby entailed. What will be put in the place of what is destroyed? Vandalism can be performed with physical knocking down. Precisely the same thing can be effected by standing passively, doing nothing where helpful action is called for. It is vandalism to withhold a protection which is strictly necessary. It would be the same intolerable kind of behaviour to withdraw necessary stimulation from the

Rosary by keeping silent about it. If Christianity itself ceased to be taught it would necessarily wither away.

There is another way in which the Rosary can be hurt and that is in the over emphasising of the perfection with which it must be said. Of course we are supposed to meditate on the Mysteries according to our capacity. But here let there be moderation. We must not impart too much mental strain to it lest we turn it into something that it was not originally intended to be. In it we are saying certain prayers which must have their place and meaning. It would be a very extraordinary proceeding to keep on saying those prayers but never giving them a thought while the mind goes off on excursions into completely different fields.

No more solemn words exist that the scriptural phrases of the Ave. They furnish a compressed meditation on the Incarnation of the Son of God. We could not dwell too often on that central event of time so that to speak of those words as vain repetition is both disrespectful and dangerous. If we can but impress the fact of the Incarnation upon our minds we have become rich and privileged, even though all other comfort is lacking to us. And on the other hand if we do not appreciate that event we are in misery, though we may have gained the whole world.

So precious therefore are those words that we must often return to them and not allow them to be totally submerged by any other meditation.

The Rosary is a prayer which fits itself to changing circumstances. At times of sickness or of exhaustion there is no other so useful. It comes within our reach. What we then want is restfulness in the spirit of prayer. So let the beads slip through the fingers without concern as to what

particular accompaniment the mind is playing, because it is truly resting in God and is attentive to Mary. This is the essence of prayer. Prayer is a state more than it is a recital.

As we say the Rosary we try now, as a background and another time as a foreground, to stage the Mysteries before our minds. However meagre our powers to meditate, we cannot help learning all those Mysteries. They expand into so many 'photographic' situations, linking themselves up with the various pictures we have seen or the accounts which we have heard or read of those events. We may be sure too that grace takes hold of that 'picturisation', intensifies it and renders it fruitful.

We must not make this operation too involved for ourselves. The Rosary must be left essentially simple. Its main idea is a chat with our mother about her on, herself and about all the elements of salvation. We say the Pater with her in absolute union. Then we have our little mixed meditation with her, frequently falling back on the actual words which we speak to her. Then at the end of each decade she says the Gloria with us as she did with St Bernadette at Lourdes; you will recall that episode. Anyone who says the Rosary will have a reasonably complete and vivid idea of the Christian narrative and I repeat that this is a necessary foundation for all prayer. Indeed what good are any prayers if they do not rest on that foundation of knowing what they are all about?

As an example of what can follow from straining too far, I mention what has been called the German Rosary. For the pious purpose of trying to make people meditate all the time, the subject of the particular Mystery has been inserted into each Ave. The result has been that the five decades occupy 35 minutes. As a consequence the Rosary is no longer said in Germany except by the Legion which

uses our ordinary method. That admirably exemplifies the saying that the perfect is often the enemy of the good.

So there is my contention: the Rosary is a treasure which must be cherished. It combines in itself a host of ingredients, among them being Mary the Mother of the Church and of every soul in it and outside it. It acknowledges her position. It teaches us the Christian religion and it induces us to pray. If the Rosary be hurt, Mary's place will be diminished and so will the quantity of prayer in our lives. In practice nothing will be inserted in substitution for that which has been taken out. That is where the vandalism would enter in. Something is knocked down and nothing is put in its place. The Rosary is irreplaceable.

I have only one little complaint in my own mind regarding that treasure. It is that it does not go far enough. Instead of abolishing it I would wish to see it extended. How? I would like to see a few Mysteries included for the purpose of directing the minds of the people to them, for they are no less important than those which are comprised.

In the first place, it is an astonishing thought that the Immaculate Conception does not form one of the fifteen Mysteries, although it is the foundation of all the privileges of Our Lady; the special fashioning of her for the Incarnation. Presumably the reason why it was not incorporated was that at that time the Immaculate Conception was the subject of disputation and that only subjects which were not in any sense in question were chosen.

Secondly - the birth of Mary, which might be regarded as the first dawning of salvation on earth.

Thirdly - the marriage of Mary, because it meant the constitution of the Holy Family, the immediate preparation

for the Incarnation and because it gives prominence to St Joseph, enhancing devotion to him.

Fourthly - the marriage feast of Cana which represented the opening of Our Lord's mission which then terminated on Calvary.

Fifthly - the institution of the crowning Mystery of the Eucharist.

That would be four fives instead of three fives. This would utilise still more than at present this marvellously psychological and effective method of teaching doctrine, of working it into people's minds and then of reflecting it back to God as worship.

The Legion Is Pure Christocentrism

Nowadays the Legion would seem to have come into its own. After wandering like the Israelites in the desert for approximately 40 years, it is now recognised everywhere.

I suppose all have read the papal letter which has come to us and which is a signification of that universal recognition. Those who are not experienced in Vatican communications may take it all as a matter of course. But those who have had any dealings with that most august of all bodies will realise that they seldom write a document of its tone. They have, to use the popular expression, gone to town over the Legion. The approbation conveyed to it therein is unreserved. Not content to bestow a general approval, each detail of the Legion is taken and commended strongly. Perhaps the most gratifying words in the whole letter are contained in a phrase which people might be inclined to pass over: 'His Holiness is happy to rely on this spirit of the Legion.' These are overwhelming words. But they mean what they say. The Pope sees the

Legion as a great army on which he can depend in this time of crisis.

But all is not commendation that has been coming along. Of late there has been a wild outburst of criticism of the Legion. These opposites should not surprise us and such attacks must be faced in the Christian way. They characterised the life of Our Lord himself. If we expect triumph, we must be ready for the contradiction which is mixed up in it. The handbook puts this in a pithy phrase: 'We cannot pick and choose in Christ.' As a principle, opposition must come to the man and to the society which align themselves uncompromisingly with Christ. We cannot escape the impact of this law. If one does escape it is a bad sign; something has gone wrong. The Legion has tried to effect this alignment with Our Lord. It has sought to identify itself with him in every conceivable respect. This is the very keynote of the Legion, yet only too many have completely failed to discern it. It is the old tale of not being able to see the wood for the trees; they deny the existence of the wood!

I explain this. It is intriguing to find one charge constantly levelled against the Legion. It is alleged that it is not Christocentric. This is a word of imposing sound. It is being used in the manner of a conjuror's word, or like the magic incantation in the fairy tales. The very mention of the word Christocentric proves the Legion to be wrong! So religion must have Christ as centre. Of course that is a truth, the very essence of truth, because we are Christians. But incredible to say, those people who keep on casting that word against the Legion as a condemnation thereby mark themselves as not having properly grasped what it means. By adhering excessively to the natural image of a circle and its centre they have tended to obscure the true

idea for themselves. Christocentrism is not a pointing towards Christ, but a living in him and then an outward radiating of him.

Moreover those persons are mostly using the term as a deprecating of our devotion to Mary. Without realising the fact they confess themselves to be minimisers of Our Lady and at the same time to be ignorant of the correct meaning of the term Christocentrism.

This is a big statement. I am now going to try to justify it and also to show that so far from the Legion of Mary falling short in point of Christocentrism, it is in fact the Christocentric organisation par excellence, that is to say in a pre-eminent manner.

Perhaps this latter claim may bring a retort: 'If such be your ambition why not call yourselves "Legion of Christ"?' This suggestion proceeds to us currently from an Argentinean priest. He does not see that the very proposition negatives itself. For was not Our Lord known as the son of Mary? Why then should we not be known as the Legion of Mary, if our aim is that of identification with Our Lord?

The Legion is built root and branch on the doctrine of the Mystical Body; its entire scheme issues from that foundation. The Mystical Body is sometimes called the whole Christ; that is Our Lord and his members. In discussing this I do not cover the ground of the handbook, which explains the idea of the Mystical Body extensively and in great detail. I simply say that the Legion is intended to be an expression of the Mystical Body identified with Christ; and this not merely as a fact and a truth but on the basis of a comprehension of that fact and that truth. This is vital. Because it is possible to confront a fact and not to understand it. Here the fullness of the fact which

must be understood is that the Legion is Christocentric. This is intended to apply not merely in a general way but in detail. And – so far as can be contrived – down to minor points. The Legion is anxious to embrace every feature in the following of Christ.

All its doctrines, principles, prayers, rules, works and methods bear on Christocentrism. This topic is so important and yet so large that a single article cannot possibly hope to cover it. Yet sketchy as my present effort is, I think it will display the remarkable position held in this respect by the Legion of Mary. I now consider this in detail.

The Legion tries to understand the Holy Trinity. Obviously this is not by an intellectual perception, which would be impossible, but by a glimpsing of the doctrine in faith. If we want to be Christocentric in any true sense of the word that glimpsing is essential. Why? Because Christ lived in the Trinity and was the visible embodiment of the Trinity. Therefore anyone who seeks to live in Christ and share in his life must be found giving some sort of loving attention to the persons of the Trinity. This has always been deemed to be beyond the reach of ordinary people and especially to be outside the scope of an active organisation. I also do not know of any other active society which aims at giving to the Holy Trinity the same sort of attention. The handbook sections on the subject of the Trinity were not originally comprised but forced themselves in as the Legion began to mature and to understand itself; for the Legion was growing up as a person would.

The same principle applies in regard to prayer. No active organisation insists so much on prayer as does the Legion. As the Legion sees things it must by virtue of its

‘I Have Suffered With Him Whom I Saw Suffer’

We have been receiving a large number of visits from distinguished persons on their way to and from the sessions of the Great Council. From our talks with them it has been made clear that most of the bishops have made up their minds about the Legion and are going to rely on it in the tasks which lie ahead. We have found them familiar with the various items of Legion history and particularly appreciative of its capacity to put courage and toughness into its members, so that they stand up to ill-usage instead of retreating from it.

You will agree that in those words a very good definition has been afforded of the difference between an army and a mob. The army stands up to its work and the mob takes to flight. In that judgment I would think that those prelates are judging rightly and that the decisive circumstance is going to be that one of strength. This will be the case even in places where the graver troubles may not declare themselves. In the end it will be found that the common

tasks, which perhaps are the most important, likewise depend upon that quality of strength. It should not be forgotten, for instance, that it requires as much solid quality to work in one of our hostels as to face up to something like China. A glamour can attach to the more spectacular combats and to martyrdom itself, which can assist us to bear them. But the daily facing of the cross of suffering and frustration, whose shadow stretches out through all the years ahead, can be truly what is called a white martyrdom.

We were speaking with the bishop of one of the South American dioceses. He painted a grim picture of the task of creating order out of the religious and general chaos of that territory; faith and practice are gone. In that situation he was placing his entire reliance upon the Legion and for the special reason that the Legion has backbone and is able to communicate it to the people. In that he is discerning. He sees that all the other qualities without that one of strength are of doubtful value in the time of difficulty, a little like the case of bricks in a wall without cement and mortar. Any virtue must possess strength to make it worthwhile.

And this holds for the quieter virtues as much as for the sterner ones. Gentleness, kindness, and love without strength, would really only amount to weakness – if you think things out. So I am going to talk to you about strength in the Legion. I am going to tell you where to find it and how to find it in a balanced form – that is kept in its true place. We are not seeking a mere strength, which could be a hard, cruel, crushing thing – indeed not a good thing at all.

Where does the Legion find that strength which people observe in it? The secret lies in having our Christian

Virgin. It exists in an English translation and it is based on the idea that what you cannot tell about Our Lady by absolute knowledge, you can often deduce by relating her to the circumstances of her time and to the way in which a girl of her age and condition would have lived. Orsini proceeds on the principle that Mary would be faithful to the approved usages, religious and customary, of her people. On this basis he gives in detail an account of the way Our Lady spent her day, the prayers she would say; how she was dressed and so forth.

When you have familiarised yourselves with those three books, you will have provided yourself with something in the way of a knowledge of her. On that your mind must play constantly, because you must know her. She is your mother, more so than your earthly mother. She is the custodian of your soul and your life. She is the person who is referred to in today's liturgy as the woman into whose hands God places salvation.

I have referred to the Dolours and to the Rosary. Each of the mysteries comprised teaches its own essential lesson. Out of them I am going to pick for present purposes one which I think has not been called upon to yield its full lesson to us. This lesson moreover bears upon my subject; that is of strength.

I speak of the gospel picture of Our Lady at the foot of the Cross: 'There stood by the Cross of Jesus his mother.' What force in a few words! The Evangelist insists that she was standing. Not only did she stand erect in her body, but her mind and her heart stood up unflinching also. One of the ideas which is applied to her by the Church is that she is the strong woman, the strong woman of all time. She is exhibited to us as an ideal of strength, strength in its purity without admixture of any of those other things

that would amount to dross. She is the strong woman, and the episode of Calvary is the special presenting of that to us.

Therefore it is that moment of the consummation of Redemption, when suffering reached its maximum point and when, according to the ordinary rules of humanity, weakness should also assert itself most, which we must present to ourselves in our own peak moments of difficulty. If we do, that twofold operation of nature and grace will accomplish itself in us. Strength will rise up in us and we will meet the crisis in what I might call a positive way. That word 'positive' is important here. Usually we face a difficulty in a negative way that is we yield a little interiorly. Our first reaction is of weakness. Perhaps then we make an effort to mobilise our resources; we try to be positive. But in that moment of hesitation we have invited defeat. At best we have lost ground which we may not recover. So we must aim at doing better – at not surrendering at all. If we succeed, the trial turns into a triumph.

To effect this to the fullness of its possibility we should seek to enter intimately into Mary's state of mind as she stood gazing on her son. We must identify our own misery and necessity with hers. We must use our own suffering as a means of enabling us to appreciate hers. 'Knowledge by suffering entereth,' says Browning. If in the moment when intolerable torment and grief seize us, we turn our thoughts to her, we get a little insight into the extent of her sufferings – not as an exercise in theory but in a dreadful practice.

Associating our suffering and weakness with her, we throw the emphasis on *her* woe. Then we must struggle desperately to rise to the heroism of being even *glad* that

we are suffering with her at that moment. The role we must aspire to is that of standing up in her and suffering in her in a sort of identity. There is strength in this. We supernaturalise and sweeten our own emergency.

The technical term which is applied to Mary's sufferings is her compassion. Many words have suffered modification of meaning through the passage of time and that word is one of them. 'Compassion' thus applied to her has not its present conventional meaning, which is only to feel pity. Similarly the word 'passion' which designates Our Lord's ordeal of suffering means only anger today. Our Lord was not in a rage. Neither was Our Lady merely pitying him in his agony. Her compassion meant her suffering his Passion along with him. 'I have suffered with him whom I saw suffer.' His very pains were transferred to her through her eyes and her exquisitely sensitive nervous system. So that she endured his sufferings along with him for our sakes.

Moreover, a very suffering of death was in question. She felt the agonies of death along with her son and she would have died with him but for the fact that she was miraculously preserved. The Church teaches us this describing her as almost dead. But her time was not yet come: she had another task of mothering to do.

This idea of her compassion is an essential one in Christianity. It was the plan that she was to share in a real way in the mission of Our Lord. She would initiate it. She would be brought into it in such a pivotal way that, even though dependent on Our Lord, she would help to earn Redemption and afterwards share in his administration of grace. The Church has accorded to her the designation of Co-Redemptrix, and she is the Mediatrix of All Graces in the sense that they are not given without her.

It has been the will of God to exalt her to the maximum degree of which she was capable. She was prophesied at the time of the Fall as the woman who would cooperate in Redemption. It was to that prophecy of the woman and her seed that all men looked forward from the time of the Fall. All nations as they separated and went out over the world bore with them that image. It occurs in their religions in some shape or another, disfigured but recognisable: The woman and her child of salvation.

So when Our Lord stood up on his Cross and consummated Redemption, she was standing at its foot as the gospels meaningfully insist. At that epochal moment Our Lord, speaking to her, cast the minds of all generations back to the original prophecy, indicating that she was the woman who would help in Redemption: 'Woman, behold thy son.'

Protestants have traditionally suggested that Our Lord at that most solemn moment of all was being disrespectful to his mother – an idea which would lower the son even to a greater extent than it would diminish the mother! Finally their scholars wakened up to the unworthiness of it. They have produced a new Bible which has been accepted by all the Protestant Churches over the world, so far as I know, without exception. It is a respectable document. In it they try in many ways to make amends for past wrongs of interpretation. Among other things, in order to uproot that false conception and forever to dispel any notion that Our Lord could be disrespectful to his mother in his final moments, they replace the word 'woman' by the word 'mother'.

It is a gracious act on their part but thereby they err in another way. They remove the intended, significant word. 'Woman' is here the important word. It is the word which

bridges the chasm of years between the Promise and the fulfilment of the Promise. The woman is now helping her seed to redeem the world.

Mary was the most exquisite creature that could be. Therefore she could suffer, you might say, almost infinitely beyond all others. Her feelings had an approximation to those her son. The Church places on her lips the words of scripture: All ye who pass look and see if there is any sorrow unto mine. All generations have assigned to her the title: the Woman of Sorrows. Just as Jesus encompassed the whole gamut of human woe, so did she. Though our limited understanding cannot see how such could be. His sufferings and hers contained every possible ingredient. Her agony of mind communicates itself throughout her body, so that in one intense operation she endures all possible torments. All of these, save despair, she must have felt to the extreme.

Her own perfection enhanced her ordeal. She was immaculately conceived and therefore sensitive beyond ordinary nature. Only Jesus could feel more acutely than she. Likewise her glorious intellect gave her insight into what was taking place. In these circumstances her affliction reached depth beyond our probing. Yet there was joy in her. This may seem to entail contradiction. St Bernard, referring to this mysterious process, says that she had perfect faith and complete suffering together; that she acquiesced with all her heart in the Crucifixion and yet it broke her heart. She knew that she would see her son again in a few days and yet what was before her eyes represented the end of the world to her. To glimpse how such joy could exist in her side-by-side with such a degree and type of suffering, we have to realise that the faith, which was her supreme quality and her consolation,

made her feel to the full both the beauty and the horror of the Cross which had as its victim the loveliest, the most innocent, the most exalted person that could be: her almost infinitely loved child. In a word, her faith gave her exact appreciation of the position and this accentuated every aspect of it, including what appear to be absolute opposites.

With ideas and motives such as those made familiar to us by reflection and practice, we must seek to unite our own suffering with her as she stands at the foot of the Cross. Standing there with her – or rather in her – we must be worthy of her. We must not cower and cry and wish to be dead, for she did not give way like that. Neither must we indulge in self-pity, for she had no thought of herself. Nor must we lie down on the ground and abandon ourselves to despair, because despair was not in her. If we want to be like her and to help her, we must call up strength and courage in ourselves. This idea of helping her is a justified one; our help is a real help, just as our helping of Our Lord is real, even to the point that he has made himself dependent on it, requiring it, leaning on it and being helpless without it.

Strength say St Paul is developed in weakness. That is, of course, by fighting the weakness. If we suffer manfully in Mary we invest that suffering with her quality and her quality flows into us in all its forms. We receive her strength and along with it her faith and all her virtues. The law of common goods operates.

In connection with the recent Legion crisis in regard to the Regina Coeli Hostel, I had the opportunity of proving the value of the above process. I think that it may have preserved my sanity, for the horror of the situation was indescribable. What faced us was the abomination that

250 of the most helpless and vulnerable of the population were to be cast to destruction. In one minute the work, which had taken 33 years of desperate striving and devotion on the part of many to build up, was going to be hurled to the winds. So that it was not a question of only the 250 but all the multitudes who would in the future be subjected to shipwreck by the taking away of the ark which could have saved them. That prospect was beyond bearing. I cannot think about it even at the present moment without quivering with pain. Death seemed a happy way of escaping the torture of it. And yet you know that it is one of our little recourses in times of weakness to wish that we were dead! But that marks a surrender in us, an escape.

So I tried what I have been talking to you about. I sought to bury myself and my torment in Mary, to stand upright in her at the foot of her son's Cross and her own – merging my pain in hers. I found it almost easy to do that by reason of the fact that it brought visible physical relief. It reduced my own position to proper perspective; my torture lessened; I held control. Eventually the crisis was surmounted. We may suppose that the underlying graces of the situation far exceeded in their worth the benefits which were made evident.

'And Thy Own Soul a Sword Shall Pierce' (Lk 2:35)

A new stage of the Church's year was visibly marked by the dismantling of the cribs and the careful putting away of the figures that filled them – Our Lady and the Child, St Joseph, the shepherds, the gorgeous Magi with (in the better sets in any event) some of their picturesque following, the camels, etc.

That removal marks the passing of the season of the Nativity which concludes on 2 February in the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin. But likewise on that same day we celebrate the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple and the recognition of him as the Messiah by holy Simeon and the aged Anna the prophetess; these make prophecies of the Redemption which are of a sensational character. It will be seen therefore that the feast is a sort of mixed up one. It embodies the characteristic feature of the lives of Our Lord and his mother, i.e. that they are an inseparable combination of joy and sorrow, of suffering

and glory. No different is the Christian destiny; if we reach out for the one, we find that we have got hold of the other as well.

When Did They Come?

The Presentation is one of the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary and likewise it is the first of the Seven Dolours – a study in contradictions. To be noted as a preliminary thought is the fact that the Holy Family were in Judea at the time – i.e. 40 days after the Nativity, showing that the Magi had not come on the previous 6 January as is commonly supposed, but much later, because immediately after the Magi went to Bethlehem, they returned home at the bidding of the angelic messenger. Soon after that, the angel told St Joseph to take the child and his mother and fly into Egypt, which was done. The German mystic, Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, whose writings have a merit of their own, said that the Magi arrived nine months after the Nativity, but I would incline to the belief that 6 January was no case of an arbitrary date and that it possesses significance. So that we may believe that it was on the 6 January twelve months that those distinguished figures arrived.

The same Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, explains why Mary and Joseph could come to the Temple so soon after the Nativity and the talking that the shepherds had indulged in (Lk 2:20), and yet create no particular commotion. She said that the shepherds' statements were noised abroad a good deal at the time, not only in Bethlehem but in Jerusalem which is only six miles distant from Bethlehem; but that those statements were regarded as nonsense by the more important people. She also says that those rumours came to the notice of Herod.

Of course everybody was on the look-out for just such a thing, because the time for the coming of the Messiah according to prophecy had arrived. Therefore people's minds were in a state of pious tension. Herod thought the matter sufficiently important to investigate. He sent some official of his down to Bethlehem to have a look at things. That investigator interviewed Mary and Joseph and reported back that they were only poor folk making no lofty claims and that the whole thing was not worthwhile bothering about.

The Offering of the Poor

According to the Old Law, a woman was unclean after the birth of a child, for 40 days in the case of a boy and for 80 days in the case of a girl. Reason for the difference – not clear. The mother had to come to the Temple and relieve herself of that uncleanness. She had to give an offering which was prescribed in the Books of the Old Law. It was a lamb and a turtle dove; or if the parents were poor, they could substitute an extra dove for the lamb. Then the priest in charge would pray over her she was purified.

The second ceremony which goes to compose that feast was the presentation of the first-born son to God. It formed a reminder to the Jews, coming down from the days of Moses, that their first-born had been saved in Egypt while those of the Egyptians were slain. That first-born was to be offered in the Temple, but could be immediately redeemed by a money payment. At the time of Our Lord the amount of money specified was five shekels. As you will see, the value of all these offerings was quite considerable and they came from every mother.

Every Condition Was Fulfilled

Mary and Joseph as devout believers fulfilled these ceremonies to the letter. Mary was not subject to any defect either by way of Original Sin or otherwise, and really she did not come under the law. But it was no part of her policy to make herself conspicuous by standing out. Indeed reflection will show that it would not be possible for her to explain the real position in which she was. People would not understand or believe her. So she came to the Temple and she fulfilled all the conditions. One of these was the making of the offerings.

It was not a fact that Joseph and she were poverty-stricken. It is probable that they had a hard time in Egypt, where they were strangers in a strange land, but that would not apply to their own country. St Joseph was an honest and competent tradesman who probably earned pretty well. In those circumstances Mary could, no doubt, have given the lamb and the turtle dove, but instead she availed of the privilege granted to the poor and gave an extra dove instead of the lamb. Why? Here we are surely in the presence of a vast symbolism which we must try to probe. If we reason things out, we will realise that she was already offering a lamb – her child Jesus, the Lamb of God! The ritual lamb prescribed by the law only stood for the Lamb of God. When inserted in the code at the beginning, it had the Redeemer, the Lamb of God, in mind and it stood for him. It would have been quite inappropriate in the circumstances for Mary to offer another ordinary lamb and so she offered the two doves.

Woman of Genesis Prefigured

It is of interest to speculate on what the dove represented side by side with the lamb. We might be inclined to ask:

Why should it represent anything more than an animal offering? No. Everything in the liturgy of the Old Testament prefigures the Woman of Genesis and her seed who would jointly redeem the world. Everything, however small, had its pointing. It stood for something vital. Therefore, just as the lamb stood for the Lamb of God who would be sacrificed, so the dove had to stand for something also. What else could it stand for but Mary herself who is referred to in our own Church liturgy as 'my love, my dove, my beautiful one'?

The law obliged that she present her child to God. In her case that child was someone extraordinary. That presentation in the case of the ordinary Jewish mother was nothing more than a legal ceremony – something to be gone through. To Mary it was a real giving to God the Father of his son who was also her son. It was a beginning of sacrificing him. It involved what Benedict XV in our own time has called 'the surrender of her own rights over her son'. She had a most clear insight into the course of the Redemption. All the prophecies of Holy Scripture flowed before her mind at the time, even though her knowledge told her that this was not yet the moment for the destruction of her son. Still it was an entering into the portals of the Redemption and a paralysing chill must have penetrated her heart.

But things proceed normally and she was able to purchase back her child for the five shekels. One is driven to make the remark, which sounds cynical but which is really only sad, that Our Lord always sells cheap. Judas sold him for a somewhat similar sum of money.

The law provides that the mother only received back her child for the purpose of rearing him for the worthy service of God. How this was to be fulfilled in the case of Our Lady! What a perfect work she would make of it, but at what an infinite cost to her heart!

A Great Dream Was Realised

Those ceremonies finished, there came the extraordinary meetings with Holy Simeon and then with the prophetess Anna. Each of these was led to the encounter with the Holy Family by the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit, as the gospel itself declares. The time of the coming of the Messiah according to the prophecies, as has already been said, was ripe. Simeon (says Lk 2:26) had received an answer from the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Christ the Lord. In that expectation he was eagerly waiting.

Imagine that extraordinary scene! Mary coming with the babe that she had just bought back, Joseph with her, and this aged and wonderful Simeon meeting them. Beholding the babe in the arms of Mary he recognised him. He took him in his own arms and burst out into that celebrated canticle, the *Nunc Dimittis*, the hymn of Compline: 'Now God, thou canst dismiss thy servant according to thy word in peace; because my eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: a light to the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel' (Lk 2:29-32).

Symbolism of the Candles

Let me mention that one of the ceremonies of 2 February is the blessing and the lighting of candles. Again rich in symbolism! This has caused the feast to be also called 'Candlemas'; it is a pointing to that phrase in the canticle: 'a light to the revelation of the Gentiles' and also to those other words which Our Lord himself would later on utter: 'I am the Light of the world'.

Simeon prophesised the fate alike of the Redeemer and his mother. This is done in the most solemn tone of

Scripture, one which is reserved for the primary moments. The record insists that Simeon had the Holy Spirit in him and spoke by the Holy Spirit. Addressing Mary, he said: 'Behold this child is set for the fall and the resurrection of many in Israel and for a sign that shall be contradicted.' Then he added: 'and thine own soul a sword shall pierce that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed'. We see from this the immense fact that Mary's Compassion (to use the technical word which describes Our Lady's partnership in Our Lord's Passion) was made the subject of one of the resounding utterances of scripture: an insistence on her vital part in the Redemption. Added is the mysterious reference that 'out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed'.

A Test and Turning Point

What do these words mean? What else could they mean but that just as Our Lord is going to be a test of men's hearts so that some shall succeed and rise, while others shall fail and fall; so shall it be in regard to Mary. The acceptance of her or the rejection of her shall similarly be a test of men's hearts, a turning point of salvation.

Mary was versed in the scriptures. She already knew full well that she was to be the Mother of the Man of Sorrows. She knew the depth of those sorrows. 'A worm and no man' – thus Isaiah had foretold the extreme condition to which Our Lord would be reduced! But now it comes to her from human lips – not from the Holy Book. It was the first dread tolling of the bell! She was going to be tortured along with him. She would die a mystic death along with him. 'Almost dead,' Benedict XV would say about her. Yet that was not sorrow but joy for her to hear, because it meant that as they had begun together in the mind of God

from before creation of the world and from all eternity, so they would be together to the end: the Redeemer and the Faithful One who made everything possible and who was his unfailing partner in all his mysteries. There was but one destiny, one martyrdom, one victory and one Kingdom. Neither must our gratitude and love be divided. Our worship must place her at his side – or else!

The gospel narrative then comes down to earth from those immensities. Almost coldly it remarks: 'After they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee to their own city Nazareth' (Lk 2:39).

Rome and Its Legions

Of late we have been striking a note strongly in the Legion. It is the one of total mobilisation. Such a possibility has been opened up by the tendency towards a general acceptance of the legionary ideas and by the swelling of our ranks. But one thing we must not lose sight of when we thus appeal for great numbers is the element of quality. Greater numbers must not mean for us any process of dilution, a mixing of water with wine. We must get the numbers and at the same time we must not only maintain quality but aim determinedly at driving it up. In this respect the history of the Legion has been rather interesting. It has shown that we have been able to gain numbers without losing quality. Such works as the *Peregrinatio Pro Christo* afford remarkable demonstration of that fact. It would seem that if our leaders preserve that idea of constantly pushing up standards – after the manner that one would mount a flight of stairs, every step upwards and onwards – there is no height to which that quality cannot attain.

I talk to you on the subject of quality and strength in the Legion. In the handbook there are a number of

items which endeavour to justify the Legion's choice of its name.

An impressive reference appears on page 5 of the more recent edition of the handbook. It is from the Epistle of St Clement to the Corinthians. Its force proceeds in part from the eminence of its author. St Clement was the third Pope. He was a convert of St Peter and a fellow worker of St Paul. He belonged to the purely apostolic era. The things which he spoke were obviously taught by the apostles. He holds the Roman Legion up to the early Christians as the model for the Church – a conclusive endorsement of our use of the name. He regarded it as sowing a headline to the Christians of order, discipline, unit, obedience, loyalty and courage. Then in a most interesting continuation in his next chapter he goes on to liken that closely bound human machine to the Mystical Body itself.

Another handbook reference is to the Roman legionaries on Calvary. You will recollect that quotation from Bolo which shows those legionaries as fulfilling a very mixed role:

- Executioners and then believers;
- Scoffers finishing as adorers;
- Persecutors destined to become propagators of the Christian faith.

They had dressed Our Lord up in regal purple. They had put a crown of thorns on his head and a reed in his hand as a sceptre and they had mocked him as a king. Therein they were expressing a truth which they did not comprehend, but which their successors would grasp and enforce later on when Rome became Christian. They would cause Jesus Christ to be acknowledged as King.

At the foot of the Cross they gambled for the garment which they had stripped from him. They would not tear it up. The teachers of the Church tell us that this was a pointing to the future in which Rome would keep intact the garment of doctrine which the Mystical Body wears.

They put a label over his head also and that label was wiser than they knew. It proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth to be King of the Jews, a truth if ever there was a truth.

They pierced the Lord's side with a spear bringing forth the symbolic water and blood: and after his death they presided over his burial. It was by the permission of Pilate that Our Lord's body was saved from the place of disgraceful burial and was given the shelter of a worthy, princely tomb. Pilate set his seal upon the rock which closed it and the Roman soldiers kept constant guard over it. Their watching was a guarantee of the truth of the Resurrection.

The whole thing is a study in opposites. Bolo says that on Calvary the Romans were unconsciously inaugurating the everlasting destiny of Rome in the Church. But the role of Rome began much further back. Before the Romans or the Jews had ever become nations, seven hundred years before Rome was even founded, the eye of Balaam, the Prophet, had pierced the future and seen the Roman fleet setting out to invade and conquer Judea. Fifteen hundred years in advance, he saw the Romans fulfilling their ordained part as told in the ancient prophecy of Genesis (49:10): that the Messiah would come when the sceptre, that is sovereignty, had departed from Judea (Numbers 24:24).

The chronology of that distant period is not precise, but it would appear that the final conquest of Judea was soon (perhaps immediately) followed by the birth of

Mary, the woman foretold in Genesis. That event was the commencement of the Redemption.

Also it was a Roman Decree which ordered the census and drew the Holy Family to Bethlehem causing Our Lord to be born in that town. This brought about the fulfilment of the prophecy which said that Christ would be born in Bethlehem. Otherwise he would have been born in Nazareth. Again this seemingly unconnected action of Rome prepares and ordains the circumstances of Our Lord's coming and mission. And may we not see in the Roman officials who presided at the census, the representatives of the white race, leaving the Magi to stand for the other great racial divisions, i.e. the Asiatic, Indian and Negro?

The Jews had not the legal right to put Our Lord to death. The power to inflict capital punishment had been taken from them by the Romans, so that they had to proceed through Pilate. Thus Pilate and his legionaries were the ministers of the Passion and Death of Christ. Therefore the connection between Rome and Christ did not begin on Calvary, but ages before, in fact in the mind of God in eternity.

After Calvary, the Romans served another strange purpose. Having carried out the sentence inflicted on Christ by the Jews, the Romans next executed the condemnation pronounced by Christ on the Jews. They crucified the Jews as they had crucified Our Lord. It is understood that one million Jews were destroyed by Titus in the year 70. 'Not a stone shall be left upon a stone' was the word of Our Lord and the Romans brought it to pass. In the universal ruin the Temple was torn down and the now meaningless sacrifice was finally abolished.

Then 300 years of war followed between Christ and Caesar in which Christ was persecuted in the Christians. That stage was terminated by the conversion of the Emperor Constantine in the year 313. Having become a Christian he set himself to turn the Empire into Christianity and as the liturgy says, Rome that had been mistress of error became the teacher of truth. Roman armies became the maintainer of Christian order; Roman law became the foundation of Christian law; and all the Roman institutions became propagators and channels of Christianity.

In its Christian phase the Empire was called the Holy Roman Empire. The uprise of Protestantism deprived it of reality, but it survived as a legal fiction till 1920 when the Treaty of Versailles struck it finally off the Statute Book. That was about the time when the Legion of Mary was born. At the least this forms an intriguing coincidence. 'God fulfils himself in many ways,' as Tennyson says.

The coming of the Legion means that once again the Church of Rome had an army to protect it and spread it. This force and its arms are not of the world, its warfare is spiritual. The success of that new army is before all eyes to see. It is portentous. It suggests itself to the mind as something which cannot be refused that the old Roman Legion symbolised and modelled our own, and was so regarded in the designs of Providence. If so what an unutterable joy it would be to think that Our Blessed Lord looked down from the Cross on the Roman legionaries and through them contemplated their successors in title. Let us hope that he thought about them with some degree of comfort. But note it would only be in a vast numerical development, such as the Legion forms and which we are now considering, that it would be possible to reach out to

every soul in the whole world. And this is precisely what Our Lord commanded on Mount Olivet.

And now I draw a further lesson. Does it not follow that if the Roman Legion was the foreshadowing of the Legion of Mary, then the qualities of the Roman legionaries were meant to be a pattern for us? If their indomitable courage and discipline played such a part in spreading the Church over Europe, surely no less quality would be required by Our Lord from us; all the more so as we have in our boldness assumed the name of his mother?

So I take up that question of courage and strength. The Legion is insistent on that strength in every form. The Legion without courage would be a ridiculous opposite to what it is meant to be. So courage must be shown in every department of its activity. It will be chiefly moral courage, but not that alone. China in a big way showed that torture and death were included in our charter. Since then those dreaded things have become common in the Legion. It is plain that our warfare is meant to have no limits and that the Legion is not for weaklings. All the time announcements come of violent death in the line of Legion duty.

That courage must be found in everything that the Legion touches. It must be found in its prayer and devotion, where it must be manifested in ways that cost people something. Otherwise devotion would be a spineless thing. Our courage must be plainly shown by performance in difficulties, under ridicule, in illness, in exhaustion, against temptations of every kind. Especially it will be revealed in the holding on to Christian principle in all circumstances. All around us however, little we may realise it, are opportunities for absolute heroism in that department. How many will stand up for principles

against mockery and catch-cries? See the way men are browbeaten into improper courses by the clever villainy of a few using such epithets as 'yellow,' 'traitor' and the like. These shout loudly and cow the decent majority which unfortunately has not that quality of strength to stand up even against a handful. If they did fight they would easily prevail. Scripture itself assures us that the violent bear away the Kingdom of Heaven. Even on earth one has to be strongly assertive on behalf of good. The bold ones win the day always but usually the field is left to the wrong elements.

The legionary attitude must be that of rising superior to the baser forces; of excelling in whatever we take up; of being courageously helpful; of showing true Christian qualities, even at the gravest cost to ourselves. In our ranks we see that quality being copiously produced. Take the recent case of Donal Brady, who had brought his whole family into the Legion. He was a victim in that military air crash at Shannon a while ago (January 1961). There were five young officers in the plane. In the crash Donal and the pilot were thrown out clear of the plane. The pilot was stunned and unable to arise. We do not know how hurt Donal was, but his only thought was of the three who were still in the plane, now a blazing inferno. He climbed back into the plane in an effort to rescue his companions. He and they perished. His epitaph was composed long ago by his Master: 'Greater love than this no man hath that he lay down his life for another.' But such is the superb quality which should be forthcoming from every legionary. Baptism has implanted it but it must be patiently cultivated and elicited. We slowly learn the Christian principles and are taught to put them into practice. After a while they establish themselves as our

motives. At that stage we will not be found wanting if a high summons comes.

It should be our ambition as the poet puts it, 'to guide the whirlwind and ride the storm'. To do this will require strength, a strength which does not concentrate on consequences. For our very existence it is necessary for us to be positive. If we aim at less, we will be negative. This means that we will lose our nerve in emergencies, being a danger and not an inspiration to others.

It is our tendency to let our imagination darken a prospect so that we draw back from it. What is merely inconvenient is seen as difficult and the difficult of course as impossible. All have their own special weak spots. Some are more intimidated by a fear of scenes or ridicule than by a grave danger which can surround itself with a sort of glamour. Therefore it is necessary to subject ourselves to a system such as the Legion which will measure up situations from the point of holy necessity and which will shrink neither from the real peril nor from what is merely distasteful. Perhaps the latter is the more formidable because it is more common.

Once upon a time a quaint piece of advice was given to legionaries at a Congress. It was that to achieve their objectives they should go out and get themselves laughed at – which of course presupposes that our objects and our methods are not absurd ones. There is philosophy there. It requires strength to stand up to that vicious jeering which is so lavishly distributed when someone sets out to do the right but unpopular thing. But holy strength nourishes itself upon itself and eventually cannot be resisted.

You know the phrase of the Curé d'Ars which is quoted for you so often: 'The world belongs to him who loves it most and who proves that love.' We could, I think, say

with equal truth that the completely determined person can move the world and unfortunately this principle helps the wicked as much as it helps the good. Take an episode which has affected every page of the world's history since it took place. In 1917 the Germans conceived an idea in their war with Russia. With a view to creating disorder and smashing the war effort, they let loose in Russia a number of captured Communists, among them Lenin. This manoeuvre succeeded perfectly. It tuned in with the seething discontent of Russia which had been aggravated by military failure.

Lenin's vehement organisation carried all before it. Every dissatisfied element in the country joined him and the Russian Revolution took place on lines similar to that of the French Revolution; indeed it was the French Revolution in delayed action. It took the same course. It executed the members of the Royal family and it set itself to crush out religion. Eventually Russia, which had always been regarded as one of the most instinctively religious countries, was not only deprived of its faith but turned into an instrument for destroying faith. It was Russia that transformed Karl Marx's dream into an awakening, into that reality which menaces the world today. It was Lenin, working through a comparatively small group of men, who made Russia communistic.

Such is the power of the few when moved by a sufficient motive, whether good or bad. Part of that immensity of influence is derived from the fact that God helps the good and the devil helps the bad, but there is also a psychological process at work which should not be overlooked. It is akin to the scientific fact that an inert mass is responsive to any force which is applied to it. Take for instance a great liner ready to set out on

its ocean voyage. Usually it does not start on its own engines but is pulled out to open water by a tug. The latter is a tiny ridiculous object beside a gigantic liner, but it sets itself to pull and there is a great scurry and a foam of water. For a while there seems to be no result but then the great ship begins to yield and soon it is slipping along at the pace dictated by the little craft. There is your picture of an immense inert body made a prey of by a little force. Every general population everywhere is a potential victim for some dominating influence. Of what kind is that influence going to be?

Take a slightly different case which would approximate more closely to the ordinary situation. Suppose there are two tugs pulling the liner in opposite directions. This would mean that for a long time there would be no motion. The two contrary forces would seem to cancel each other out. But we know that at some time this inertia will end. It is certain that one of the tugs will be ever so slightly stronger than the other and it will take possession. So it is in the affairs of the world. The two tugs are the forces of good and evil, which struggle for the mastery over whole populations and the battle will go to the stronger.

But of what nature is that strength? It does not lie in numbers alone because John Sobieski in the Battle of Vienna with 25,000 men destroyed the power of Mohammedanism forever on land and Lenin with a handful of helpers turned the world upside down. Nor does it lie in personal virtue alone, as the fate of the martyrs show. Nor in the justice of a cause because our cause suffered glorious defeat in China. The fact is that strength is a combination of numbers and personal qualities and good system. If any one of these is omitted the combination is destroyed and both nature and grace

are impeded. We cannot afford this if we are fighting a powerful enemy.

This brings us back again to that assembly of virtues which characterised the Roman Legion and enabled it to overcome the world. We must try to make those qualities assertive in our Legion. We can do this almost as a matter of routine by fitting in perfectly to all the simple requirements of our system which Pope John XXIII has been kind enough to describe as a most excellent system.

But let there be no picking and choosing in that system. It will not do to honour Mary and at the same time be negligent in items of duty. Nor will it do to work heroically without understanding the roots of our service. Nor to have the faith that moves mountains without being dependable. Nor to feel overwhelmed with love of God but unprepared to give him to others. These are gaps in the Christian armour which are only too common and which bring defeat. But granted that full balance of things which we believe to exist in the Legion system I think that we will be found possessed of that quality of strength which cannot be pent up. For remember that God will enter in if he finds something which is responsive to him and will perhaps enable our Legion to repeat in the spiritual order no less conquest than that effected by the Roman Legion in the physical order.

To stimulate ourselves towards that superhuman programme let us revert to the thought that when Our Blessed Lord looked down from his Cross on the Roman legionaries, he must inevitably have seen, through them, their successors in title – yourselves – the Legion of his most Blessed Mother Mary.

The Religion of Protestants

If Protestants are asked where they get their religion from, their unhesitating answer will be that they have got it from the Bible; and this they sincerely believe. But in thinking so, they are mistaken. They get their religion mainly from their classroom just the same as we do. We take it logically from that quarter, because our classrooms are the voice of the Church. They, illogically.

In those classrooms of ours, from the dawn of education, we receive the official teaching of the Catholic Church and we firmly hold that the Church is divinely authorised to deliver that material to us.

The Protestants who receive religious education enter their classrooms as we do at an early age. There they are taught much of the authentic Christianity. Then they take up the Bible and they are convinced that they find it there. But in fact they do not get it from the Bible. That is proved by the fact that if persons ignorant of the traditional Christian teaching read the Bible, there is

no knowing what they will make out of what they find there.

It is to be noted that the Bible consists not merely of the New Testament but of the Old Testament as well. Both of these books are difficult and to a large extent they are contradictory of each other. That is necessarily the case where the one is being largely superseded by the other.

If it is the position that we have a very difficult collection of documents with that principle of apparent contradiction in them, it is inevitable that he who proceeds to interpret them for himself – that is anyone who separates himself from the Church – has set his feet in the path of confusion, no matter how safe he may think he has made himself. The Bible itself assures him to that effect: 'Understand this first, that no prophecy of scripture is made by private interpretation' (2 Pt 1:20); and again that all the scriptures 'contain things hard to be understood which the unlearned and the unstable twist to their own destruction' (2 Pt 3:16).

The Orthodox Church and the Councils

Let us go back in history to a previous example of a mass departure from the Church. The Eastern Church, popularly called the Orthodox Church, may be said to have parted company with us about the year 1054. That calamity arose out of various disputes. The main issue at stake was the repudiation of the Pope, but they did not want to repudiate Catholic doctrine. Their problem was to find a formula by which they could, while getting rid of the papacy, still keep themselves, as they wished, built upon a solid rock. The formula which they devised was that of receiving all the Christian doctrine as defined by the Great Councils. This was a plausible rule of faith,

because at that time it seemed the position then was much as it might seem to us to be clarified except perhaps one or two things. Our Lady's mediation – well that has to be defined! But really everything else is settled!

Thinking along those lines, the Easterns argued: If we hold onto the Great Councils, we are safe. But thereby they were reasoning themselves into disaster. Because instead of nearly everything having been defined, there lay ahead what might be called an explosion of heresies. The vexed points which the future contained were no less numerous than those of the past. Orthodoxy had no effective way of dealing with these new heresies. When Protestantism arrived, it charged the Orthodox with inconsistency in claiming to receive only what was laid down by the Great Councils, whereas in actual fact they believed such doctrines as the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of Our Lady, neither of which had been defined and which indeed have only been defined in our own times.

That logic hit the Orthodox Church with staggering force. The result was that gradually it abandoned belief in those two great doctrines – as well as others – which from the beginning it had been conspicuous in proclaiming and defending. Thus their safe formula only turned out to be a noose for their own hurt.

Protestantism and the Bible

Protestantism in its turn wanted a rock on which, while dispensing with the papacy, it would rest secure. Its founders thought that in the Bible they had a rule of faith firm enough to support them, yet giving them the liberty that they wanted. With the Catholic teachings fresh in their minds, they looked at the Bible and they saw most of

those teachings there, as they thought. But that was where they were mistaken, because the fact is that no documents, whether the Bible or any others, can render the full Faith. The living voice of the Church alone can solve these recurring problems. And not even the Church itself can on paper provide for the future. With seeming precision it defines a question. Yet later on some novel aspect presents itself and demands attention. Nothing but the continuing living Authority can deal with the extraordinary human capacity to find flaws and work out new errors.

In facing the phenomenon of Protestantism, it is imperative to proceed on the basis that the great majority of them are sincere. For if they are not, why enter into logical argument about Protestantism at all? It would be wasting time to discuss the subject.

The original Protestants wanted to break with Rome, but they fully realised that a pillar of truth must exist around which people could assemble. They thought that the Bible would serve as that pillar. From their separatist point of view, it seemed to be ideal. It had authority as the Word of God, and to their eyes it expressed the traditional Christian teaching. So their formula was to make the Bible the sole rule of faith. Incidentally they slurred over a rather important circumstance, namely that the Bible had only just become available to the people. This was through the discovery of printing in the year 1442, which means that for fourteen hundred years the Bible had not been available to the multitude. But even if it had been, the multitude could not read it. However, the Reformers do not seem to have given much or any attention to that vital fact, although according to their own theory it meant that Christendom had been from its beginning until then without a practical rule of faith.

In any case the formula did not work. From the first moment the unsuitability of the Bible as a sole rule of faith was shown. The Reformers themselves – the very first wave of them – disputed radically on primary things. The process of fissuring or dividing up began and it has ended in the situation which faces us today. It would be a fair paraphrase of their doctrine of individual private judgement that every Protestant is his own Church. He determines his own religion. He takes up the Scriptures influenced by that tendency which I have mentioned of reading into them his own earlier education. Then by an inevitable process of adaptation and evolution, something is worked out which is different as between man and man. The result is that outside the Church there is not what can be genuinely called a religion.

Recent returns suggest that in Great Britain only two million non-Catholics attend a Divine Service on a Sunday.

In the USA it is alleged that there are one thousand sects, each one asserting that it got its doctrine from the Bible, but even inside the sects there would be fundamental differences.

Nor do things stand still. It is the property of effort to gather momentum and to multiply its forms, to complicate itself. I have shown how the Orthodox Church was compelled by its own insufficient formula to abandon doctrines which it had held from the first. The same inexorable process has accomplished itself in Protestantism. As Karl Adams puts it: 'Wide tracts of Luther's thought were simply Catholic. The people who eliminated those Catholic elements from his message were the Lutheran theologians of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.'

Jehovah Witnesses

Many are the fantastic doctrines now promulgated by the different sects, but for each and every one of them Holy Writ is quoted as the source and justification. The doctrine of private judgement has ended by producing children that are monstrosities.

In this order something which is really quite portentous has of late taken place. It is the emerging of the Jehovah Witnesses. They represent a startling manifestation. They repudiate the principal Christian doctrines: the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Divinity of Christ, Hell, and all the sacraments indeed except Baptism, which by the way has to be performed by immersion. All this would seem to us to be a total shipwreck of Christianity, but they do not see it so; they insist that their hotchpotch is taken faithfully from the Bible. In this assertion we are presented with something of capital importance. When we are examining into it, I urge that we do not take the easy way out of saying that they are a gang of twisters or morons. No doubt like all collections of men, including ourselves, they have their weak ones among them. But we must, no less than in the case of the Protestants, give them credit for being in the main sincere. If you meet many of them, you will have that conclusion forced upon you.

It is certain that they are making a shattering impact on general Protestantism. Nearly all of those who are going around promoting the strange beliefs of that creed are converts from the ordinary Protestant divisions. In leaving those sects to become Jehovah Witnesses, they are convinced that they have taken a dynamic upward step.

Note the important position therefore: They are sincere. They are intelligent. They are seeking the truth. They

take up the Bible in the absolute assurance that they will find the truth there. Yet that extraordinary programme of denial of everything that we regard as essential Christianity is the result.

The Jehovah Witnesses are a challenge to everybody who values Christianity, a summons to think and take stock. For they represent the coming to hideous, fatal maturity of a wrong principle. Now let us turn from those people to the Anglicans, who of all the sections of Protestantism, come nearest to ourselves, having most of our doctrines. Some of them have every doctrine except the Pope. So there is one end of the scale and the Jehovah Witnesses is the other end. The North Pole and the South Pole could not be further apart. Yet each of them is declaring that it gets its religion from the scriptures!

Not only that North Pole and that South Pole, but all the innumerable shadings and contradictory sets of doctrines which come in between, are found believing that they have found them in the Bible. Which proves the Bible as a substitute for the Rock of Peter is as inefficacious as the Great Councils – in fact much more so.

The scriptures were never divinely intended to be a Catechism, but a record of things done and said, as St Luke informs us in the first few lines of his gospel.

There is of course throughout the New Testament a good deal of doctrine set out in a sketchy way, and this sketchy way is just what causes the trouble. It results in the scriptures forming a sort of mirror for our own minds, reflecting back to us the beliefs that we hold. The Catholic, the Protestant and the Jehovah Witness all think they find their own creeds there.

A Valuable Experiment

Many years ago an intensely valuable experiment was made in China. It arose out of the wish to find what impression was being made by the scriptures on minds which had no previous knowledge of Christianity. Let us take – it was said – a highly intelligent pagan with absolutely no background of Christianity, give him the New Testament to study and to say what he has made of it.

That experiment selected a leading intellectual, a man of great attainment. As I have said, he had no knowledge whatsoever of Christianity; it was unknown territory to him. He conscientiously fulfilled the request made of him, studied the book with extreme care, and then produced his verdict. He said: 'What is it all about? Who is this Jesus Christ? What is he up to? I cannot make head or tail of this book.'

That is an exceedingly important episode. Let not your light comment on it be: 'I do not understand that man, because I am able to see the meaning of the New Testament easily.' Of course you are when you have the secret of the whole thing. All your knowledge fits in with what is there. What you know – that is what the Church has taught you – is the key to everything that is there. Therefore the book makes sense to you.

But what happens if you are deprived and to the extent that you are deprived, of that enlightenment which proceeds ultimately from the Church? The answer is contained in that Chinese experiment. That highly intellectual specimen of the human race could make nothing out of the New Testament narrative, which is the simplest part of the Bible.

Just as the Protestant thinks he has received his doctrine from the Bible, so does he imagine that he is obeying the

prescriptions of the Bible. In fact he is not doing so. What about the Rules of the Old Testament? The Old Testament is in length the greater part of the Bible. Look through its pages and see the sort of orders and regulations with which it bristles. For instance read the minute detail in regard to eating and fasting. Among the dishes sternly prohibited to the Jews were the hare and the pig. If the modern Protestant were to observe that rule, it would interfere very much with his diet.

Keeping the Sabbath

There is the question of keeping holy of the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath is Saturday. Why do Protestants observe the Sunday? It was the Church that authorised the observance of the Sunday. The Sabbath rules were drastic. They permitted work of no description. They did not permit a fire to be lit. One could not even gather sticks for a fire on that day. One must not cook a meal. The food of the Sabbath had to be prepared on the previous day. And there was even the regulation that you must not catch a flea on the Sabbath Day except that it is hurting you greatly! Nor must you walk further than six furlongs. Every seventh year there must be no sowing of the land, nor care of your vineyard. What would grow itself must not be reaped or gathered. These things are laid down with severity.

The Books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy enshrine much binding legislation of that description, all of which is ignored by the Protestants and ourselves. We logically, by the permission and instruction of the Church. But who permits the Protestants? The fact of course is that they took over the Church dispensations along with the part of Catholicism which they retained at the time of the Reformation. But as they have repudiated the authority of

the Catholic Church, what right have they to benefit by those things? They are bound in logic to go back to what is written in the Old Testament.

When you query them on these points, they explain to you that the Old Law has been set aside. Well then, how much of the Old Law? Our Lord himself said that he came to fulfil the law and not to destroy it. How does that suggestion of theirs that the Old Law has been abrogated bear on the Ten Commandments? Were these not included in the part set aside?

As justification for disregarding that code regarding eating they quote particularly the text from the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 10, verse 15 – which refers to the celebrated vision of the linen sheet let down from Heaven, and the voice declaring to St Peter that anything which was made clean was not to be regarded as common. This the Protestants interpret as annulling the whole code dealing with unclean animals, but what was really at stake at that moment was the calling of the Gentiles, and St Peter read it in that figurative sense.

Protestants also point to the Epistle of St Paul to the Colossians (Col 2:16) as justifying the alteration of the Sabbath and the abandonment of the severe regulations attaching to it. I will quote that text for you: 'Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a festival day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbaths.'

If that is the justification that they are appealing to, it could carry them very far indeed. For instance could it not be argued that it sets aside the requirement of keeping holy the day of rest or Sabbath, and that it permits one to eat and drink to any extent one likes, even to the most scandalous excess? Obviously, it could not mean the latter or the repudiation of the Sabbath. Moreover the self-same writer,

St Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb 4) is peremptory as to the duty of observing the day of rest, and carefully repeats the divine words in such a fashion as to suggest that he was demanding the full Jewish rigour on the subject.

Actually the position is that the text that no man is to judge you in regard to eating and drinking or the Sabbaths refers to the fact that one is no longer bound by the old ritual governing those things, but instead by the new order established by the Church.

That is very plain to us. But what is the person who has no other authority to appeal to, to make of these different texts? One text where St Paul seems to be insisting most sternly on a rigid and Judaic observance of the Sabbath: and another text where he appears to be removing all restrictions on eating, drinking and Sunday observance?

Protestants in their study of the Bible do not see those inconsistencies. They have their own respectable way of behaving and of keeping the Sabbath which they have been brought up to. Whatever they believe and wish to do, they will find a text to justify it. The Church tells us exactly what we have to do in those cases of apparent contradictory regulations. But who tells the Protestants? They pick from what they have been traditionally taught and they give it the turn which appears right to them. It is a sincere performance but it can lead to anything and it has led to everything – even to the Jehovah Witnesses.

A while ago in *Maria Legionis*, I ventured to contend that to the mind left to itself unguided, every text in scripture is capable of rendering 50 different meanings. Fifty of course is a general term, but undoubtedly the number of possibilities is great, as proved by the Protestant variations. If the Catholic Church is put aside, you can make very much what you like of the Bible.

I have referred to the Jehovah Witnesses as a sort of explosion of denial. They seem to deny everything that we hold. Actually I would regard them as the best practical argument in existence against the Protestant rule of faith.

Ethel and her Antics

Some years ago in the *Evening Herald* there was a rather humorous series about an alleged character called Ethel and her antics. She was a maid and not of the most perfect sort. It developed in the course of the narrative that she was dishonest, disobedient, disobliging, dirty, lazy, impudent, untruthful and given to breaking things. She emigrated to England and her supposed ex-employer described her departure to that land as 'Ireland's revenge for Cromwell'.

If we may harness such a joke to solemn things, we might say that the Jehovah Witnesses are likewise God's revenge for the Reformation. The Jehovah Witnesses are likewise God's Witnesses as to the fatal consequences of not hearing the Church. The Jehovah Witnesses are the confounding of those who claim that the Bible is the only teacher and that it teaches clearly, because the Jehovah Witnesses reject all established Christian doctrine and yet say that the Bible has taught them. The Jehovah Witnesses are the battering ram against the principle of private judgement, because they make it so ridiculous. They represent Protestantism taken to its logical conclusion. They represent the end of the road and the abyss comes next, that is if the Jehovah Witnesses are not themselves the abyss.

Protestants, come back into your Father's House before that abyss absorbs you.

'An abyss where life and truth and joy are swallowed up' (Shelley).

Mary Kept Hens at Nazareth

Monsignor Alfred O'Rahilly, frequently quoted in the Legion handbook, says that we may piously believe that Our Lady kept hens at Nazareth. This is an unexpected idea. Did anyone think of it before? I cannot remember any of the countless pictures of Our Lady, which thus represented her. Yet it gently touches an important chord. For we must not imagine her as in any way removed from our condition. There is a danger of that by reason of her exalted qualities and role. She is so close to God that she cannot come any closer. To be brought any more into God would mean an incarnation, and such was not the plan of God. Mary had an altogether special part of her own to play and it was dependent on her being a pure creature.

But she was raised to the very edge of the divinity. Understanding this and seeing the uniqueness of the place assigned to her in the whole scheme of grace, we might tend towards the error of regarding her as remote from ourselves; as a lofty aloof personage who is gracious

enough to receive our petitions and generous enough to grant them. The contemplation of her as queen might make her less a mother to us. This must not be; the vital note is that of mother.

The fact is that the plunging of her into God does not remove her from our condition, but does the contrary. It brings her nearer to us. It makes her more a woman than any other woman, more a mother than any other, more human in the ideal sense of the word than the rest of mankind. This is a strange but a justified idea. She is more loving, solicitous, understanding, than any other woman of all time. She combines things, which are usually opposites. She is set above the angels and occupies the throne beside her son, but she is the humble maid. She is mother and yet she is virgin. She has the brightest intellect, but she is the simplest person of all. She was united to the Holy Trinity. She was Queen of the Angels, of the entire universe, of all men – but she kept hens!

Not Merely a Hobby

This idea gives us a right perspective on her life. Let us pursue it a little. She did not keep hens merely as a hobby, while being at the same time in a dreamy almost ecstatic state. No, the cackle of those hens makes a harmony. It strikes a right keynote, and false notions have to re-adjust themselves.

Did she have a vegetable patch? Most likely. If she had the ground it would be her housewife's instinct to us it, realising that God intended it to be put to service. This point is no mere trifle; it is dwelt on in scripture. Remember the story of the talent that was hidden in the ground so that it brought forth no increase. God condemned that servant. Could anyone imagine Our Blessed Lady saying

to God at the Judgement; 'Yes I had a strip of ground but really it was not worth the trouble of cultivating it; it was easier to buy the vegetables in the village'?

Consider also that those vegetables were to nourish her son, so that there was a sort of necessity that she should have a part in producing them.

Accordingly to the circumstances Mary would be found doing all the things which the normal woman would do, and interesting herself in a practical way in everyone and everything around her. In this we have come to a sort of central point, of which the chickens and the vegetable garden would only be the signs. She was housewife and mother at Nazareth as a preparation for being mother of the whole world. For it is God's method to use this life in every way as a preparation for the next. If we are to have a special role in the next world, we enter on it here and, so to speak, serve an apprenticeship to it. Mary was the perfect citizen at Nazareth in order that she would be the perfect mother and model in Heaven, loving each of her children individually and being utterly concerned in all their affairs. Note that it is not enough to love people in bulk. It could be no more than a sentimental transaction. The ordinary king and queen are said to love their subjects, but how many of them do they know individually? It is, after all, a vague, unreal form of love which never gets down to the individual person.

Taking Trouble is her Trade

Not of that general, remote type is Our Lady's love for mankind. Being in God, she sees each one separately, distinctly, in minute detail. She knows all about us, almost infinitely more than would the most attentive mother on earth. And she devotes herself to each one as if there were

no other person. Indeed she goes far beyond that. She loves and tends each one of us as if we were her own son, Jesus: which in truth we are through the wonder of the Mystical Body.

Taking trouble with us would be her trade, even what might seem to us as unnecessary trouble. She could not be uninterested in anything, which bore on us. She could not take the easy way out of any situation or leave things in a state of underdevelopment. In Nazareth she would not be indifferent to defects of any kind, and the same would hold good in her wider world of today. Even local disfigurements would hurt her because each one of them stands for human indifference or helplessness. They are there because people are so undeveloped in taste or so apathetic as not to be disturbed by them. Or perhaps the people do see the misery but are not in a position to do anything about it. In either event Mary is troubled. In the first case, because that stagnation of mind most probably denotes a stagnation of soul also. In the second case, it is a minor tragedy that people are helpless to rectify things which are wrong, and that there is no one to come to their rescue.

The spirit of Mary is supposed to be our spirit. We are meant to take after our mother. She rears us spiritually. To the extent that we are wanting in her spirit we fail. In the main the world is failing in that respect. Loving the individual and being interested in him is indeed the very reverse of the modern outlook which is that of seeing people as a crowd and dealing with them in bulk. There is more talk today than in any previous age about fraternity and the serving of men, but it never gets down to the man. Problems are left as mass-problems. They are approached on bloodless lines; and as blood is a necessary

ingredient of life, these problems elude solution. This in turn means that they will come to be regarded as normal or unsolvable, so that even that cold, official treatment will not be given to them. Then they begin to rot and corrupt everything around them.

Putting Idealism to Sleep

The bloodless approach ends up in the handling of people on paper and without personal interest. Pass Acts of Parliament ordering people. Put tariffs on. Subsidise industries. Issue beautiful literature. Prove conclusively that good conduct is a paying proposition; that if all work together harmoniously the world would be a new Garden of Eden; and so forth!

After that elaborate impersonal process has run its course, one is surprised to find that the laws have not been efficacious, nor the tariffs, nor the good advice. In the main people have continued on in their wilful selfish way; the right chords have not been touched in them. The stirrings of idealism have been effectively put to sleep. The difficulties have not eased. The solutions have not been found. The community does no more than survive in convulsions. As a wise man said to me one time; 'The bloodless approach gets only the tenth part out of a man.'

As roughly typical of what is happening in every department of life, may I give the following: Recently I was privileged to talk to a large gathering of Agricultural Instructors, a responsible and expert body. My theme was that they should make full use of their tactical position in the rural community to propagate what we have been calling True Devotion to the Nation, i.e. that patriotism is not merely a war-time virtue, but far more a work of peace; that each individual is responsible for his neighbour; that

he must serve his community with self-sacrifice – and that this is the only realistic way of fulfilling the Christian programme of loving all men.

At once several spoke, saying that they would not have regarded this as coming within their scope and that they had never thought of going beyond the purely technical in their function. But then the few who were legionaries among them intervened and propounded the fullness of our idea. This afforded striking evidence of the necessity of the Legion to a community and to the nation. Is it possible that outside the Legion few possess an understanding of what full duty is or what patriotism means, or on what those things are based?

True Devotion to the Nation Necessary

In my subsequent comments I suggested to them that their method was the bloodless one; that the mercenary motive would not produce important results; and that True Devotion to the Nation, with its combination of the spiritual and mundane, was necessary to them even on the professional plane.

I suggested that the typical contact, which they were having with the agricultural community, would be something like this: 'You must plough deeper and closer furrows. You must use such and such a seed, also a new fertiliser, which are a little dearer but will give better yield. Doing these things you will make more money.'

That line of talk certainly states a fact, but analyse its impact on the ultra-conservative rural mind. He reacts against it instinctively. He does not want to be moved. What was good enough for his father before him is good enough for him. His brain freezes, for it has been reduced to the lowest level of thought, in which uncertain

profit contends against extra work and risks. Possibly it is demonstrated to him that with the expenditure of more money and effort he will do better financially. But how far does that carry one with people whose idea of an advantageous transaction is that of making money without any extra trouble? Moreover, he will quote local examples to prove that the fine new plans can go wrong, but he will not produce what he also knows, namely that human defect had entered into those cases.

From the expressions on the faces of those instructors it was evident that my little word-picture had touched a nerve-centre. Apparently that was their experience in the average contact. They were pushing at a locked door in people's minds; they were not using the key, which would open it. They were speaking the wrong language to persons whose notion of improvement is not that of making more effort but of making less, whose ambition is in fact easy money. From their own angle, those farmers are right. Why should they make slaves of themselves for money alone, and that is more or less what is being put up to them. They are able to live in their own simple way as things are. They are reasonably content. Why should they disturb all this for the sake of problematical gains?

A Little from each can Amount to a New Order

No sufficient motive has been proposed to those men. The motive which would count has not been put into the scale, namely Christian idealism, the welfare of the community, the brightening of things around them, the providing of a future for their own families, the making of the country a little more prosperous, the sending of a current of extra industry moving – all of which, like the Gulf Stream, would carry diversified warmth with it and

help to raise living above the level of mere existing. Even a little contribution from each one could add up to a New Order.

Though I have been talking in terms of one section of the community, I think that my contentions would apply to all sections. We are satisfied with insufficiency. We do not see the imperative need for developing either ourselves or others to the fullness of our capacity. A certain proportion moved by intense worldly ambitions, strive enterprisingly, but the rest, for want of an adequate motive, are content to stagnate. Necessarily the tide of life forces us forward, but we yield to it grudgingly and only partially. Life in general is lived at a fraction of its real possibility.

This would be bad enough if it were a matter of this world only; that is if the end of life terminated all. But unhappily in one sense that is not the case, for the doings of this life carry on into eternity. It is true that we can triumph in failure. The most fruitful life may be a voyage through shallows and misery, but such would only be the case if we are interiorly rising superior to the failure and making spiritual profit out of it. This would not apply to the state of underdevelopment and disheartenment to which I have been pointing. And what else but indifference and sin will rush in to fill a spiritual and idealistic vacuum?

A Hurt to the Whole World

Too often nothing but the minimum is proposed to the people, which means that they are being subjected to that process of mental freezing. Minds cannot possess or project a character, which has not been offered to them. The apparent failure has been a real failure. Human possibilities are not being elicited. Talents are being left

unprofitably in the ground. Genius is going to waste. Heroism is unexploited; idealism is perverted by the atmosphere and frequently turned to wrong causes. And worst of all potential sanctity is left to be overgrown by the weeds and stifled.

It is no case of the span of this life only, but of all eternity. Nor is it a matter of a local loss, but of a hurt to the whole world by depriving the Mystical Body of quality. All those stagnant souls should be at work. Potential in each one is the mission of influencing the world. Gray's 'Elegy in a Country Churchyard' contains many beautiful lines. One verse is appropriate here:

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear.
Full many of flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

It becomes infinitely tragic when that undiscovered gem could be a Francis of Assisi; or when the flower that wastes its sweetness could be a Little Flower. Yet that is what is happening all around us in every department of life. The economic or worldly failures are symptoms of moral defects. The natural waste is being paralleled in the spiritual order. The social misbehaviour is simultaneously taking place in the soul.

One is struck by the suitability of the Legion as a means of bringing this tangle into order and sense. It has the motive power and the manpower. It is not merely a multitude of works, which could mean but little. The Legion is the supernatural principle applied in detail to the persons and problems around us. It is the Catholic doctrine put into action through an excellent system – as

our late bellowed Holy Father said. It is truth combined with charity. And so it should share the Church's attribute of being gold with the strength of steel.

Words of Pope John XXIII

Is it an excess thus to measure the Legion against human disorder? Well, here are other words of Pope John XXIII, spoken on 13 July 1960, to a pilgrimage of French legionaries: 'The Legion of Mary shows forth the true face of the Catholic Church.' Even distantly to approximate a society to the Church is to ennoble that society. Perhaps, too, those august words suggest that the Legion presents the Church with its different features in due proportion; that the Legion acts correctly in basing itself on the doctrines of the Mystical Body and Our Lady's mediation; and that the Legion is a worthy instrument of the Church's action?

Can the face of the Church become obscured? Not to the eye of God, but it can to the eye of man. For instance, if it is not shown at all to those outside. Or if it is only partially shown, as happens when our own people remain ignorant and indifferent so that they are only seeing the Church as through a glass darkly. Or if that face is shown dirty and disfigured by our own poor living.

So out we must go to exhibit the lovely face of true Catholicism to all. We must seek out each individual in the spirit of Christian love. We must try to bring to them their glorious heritage of living in Christ. We must breathe on them the warmth of genuine interest. We must be the channel of Mary's Motherhood. We must nourish them on doctrine, teaching them the full implications of the Mystical Body.

Doing these things, we will enable Our Lord to live in men, to rule them and through them to conquer. But in

spite of all our numbers and organisation, we will succeed in none of our aims unless we have that spirit of Mary in us. And I sum up the spirit of Mary in what I said at the beginning: Though she was intimately united to the Holy Trinity, she kept hens at Nazareth.

The Jehovah Witnesses

The papers are full of a forthcoming convention of the leaders of the Jehovah Witnesses. It is suggested that 5,000 of the chief figures among them are going to hold a celebration here for a week. If they come among us, it would be very important that the legionaries should in number approach them, not by way of violence or anything of that description, but in an effort to reason and to use the opportunity of presenting to them the doctrines of Catholicism. Experience has shown that, while these people are going around approaching Catholic homes all the time, they know very little about the Church.

The Jehovah Witnesses is one of the most extraordinary religious movements that have yet appeared. The newspapers indicate that it is presenting itself under the title of the International Bible Students' Association. That name is not actually pretence; it is one of the names under which they have advertised themselves. Another name is 'The Watch Tower' and another 'Millennial Dawn'.

The End of the World

The Witnesses belong to what might be called the unreasoning fringe in religion. Their very existence and the things which they believe show the dire consequences of separating oneself from the Catholic Church. You not only seem to separate yourself from right doctrine but even from common sanity. There are many groups which manifest this tendency, among them the Mormons, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Pentecostals and the Christian Scientists. While all of these differ vastly in what they teach, all have one thing in common: They have no doubt whatever about what God is up to, what the right doctrines are, what is the fate of mankind and so forth. They pontificate on those things with complete assurance and to a degree infinitely beyond what the Pope would venture to say. And after all, the Pope has a right based on scripture and they have not. They specialise in foretelling the coming end of the world. They all agree that it is just ahead; that it is going to assume a most unpleasant form and that your only chance of saving yourself from very grievous consequences is to join them.

Armageddon is a great word among them. Armageddon is supposed to be one of the signs of the approaching end of the world and it means the rushing to arms by the nations. That is one of the favourite themes of that entire unreasoning fringe. They also insist that the very near future is to be a time of pestilences, earthquakes, floods, a rain of fire, in addition to that universal war; and that out of all mankind which is to perish so frightfully in this ordeal, the fringe will survive happily. They and only they will be immune to all the horrors and terrors. Therefore you should join up.

False Prophets Arise

Another characteristic of those fringe groups is that they are not founded by people whom we would be inclined to regard as virtuous. Some of the founders are somewhat in the villainous category.

The Jehovah Witnesses was a split off from the Seventh Day Adventists. Charles Russell, who founded the Jehovah Witnesses, was a haberdasher. He was born in the State of Pennsylvania in the United States in the year 1852. He joined the Adventists and he tells us why he was converted to them at his very first Adventist meeting. He heard them declaring that there was no Hell and that for some reason or another appealed very much to him.

Now the Adventists were in that category which expected the end of the world immediately. At that time when he joined them, they were expecting the Lord to come in 1873. The extraordinary thing about these folk is that it does not matter how many times a false prophecy is made; they merely continue to adhere to their group. Their founder, Malcolm Miller, had already prophesied that the world would end in 1843. It did not, but that made no difference.

Russell did not content himself very long in the Adventists. He did not see why Miller should be any better than he, so he also was stirred to found a religion. He took up the scriptures and proceeded to read them and had no particular trouble in drawing the truth out of them. Everybody else before him apparently had failed but he was perfectly confident in his ability to produce the truth. He went further and set himself up as the complete authority on the scriptures despite the fact that he knew neither Hebrew, Greek nor Latin, which are the original languages of the scriptures.

He declared that the second coming of the Lord and the end of the world would be in 1914. He taught that Christ was a spiritual being, none other than St Michael the Archangel, who was sent on earth to redeem mankind, receiving for that purpose a body from the Virgin Mary. At least that last little item is true. After his Resurrection, Christ returned to Heaven even more spiritualised than he had been before.

To listen to their doctrine is to realise that it consists more in negation, in a list of the things they do not believe in, than in the things they do receive. They are very emphatic about the things they do not believe. They do not believe in the divinity of Christ, in the Eucharist, Hell, Purgatory or the immortal soul. In fact they are against almost everything: Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism, the movies, military service, the United Nations, tobacco, higher education, fishing and hunting, Freemasonry, labour unions, Sunday School, voting and the YMCA. This is obviously a pretty wholesale condemnation of everything around. Nevertheless people flocked in numbers to Russell's standard because the end of the world was so near and the consequences of not being on his side when it did happen were pretty awful.

Who Then Can Be Saved?

Now what was going to happen according to this strange creed? The number to be saved in all time will be only 144,000; that is to say only an inconceivably small fraction of those who will have lived on the earth from the beginning to the end. On what is this suggestion based?

There is a reference in Scripture to the 144,000 virgins who are to be saved through martyrdom. This is the figure that he seizes on and that is the number of the saved in

all time. As these are all virgins, the married ones among you had better look out. Most of that number, all except 13,000 (they say), had already been filled up in fact before the Jehovah Witnesses came on the scene at all, so that the number remaining to be filled up from the ranks of the Jehovah Witnesses is only 13,000. Those 144,000 persons will reign spiritually in Heaven. They have apparently in respect of that particular number a conception of Heaven somewhat similar to our own; that is a purely spiritual existence, a living with God. Only 144,000 however can enjoy that happy state. Reading their literature it seems that there is no particular ambition on the part of the Witnesses to be numbered among those happy ones. Their idea of living with God in Heaven is something beyond them and does not figure much in their propaganda.

However the 13,000 vacancies are to be filled from the present and future Witnesses. It is computed that about two million reckon themselves as Witnesses today so that 13,000 is a very small proportion of them. What then happens to the remainder of humanity? First of all let us take the Jehovah Witnesses themselves. They either die before that dreadful day when the world ends or they live through it. This awful rain of destruction upon the earth, with its earthquakes, appalling fires and war and everything else will apparently leave them untouched. They will be as if they had immortality. They will live through it all, but nobody else will. The world then will not perish but will be improved. All the disasters, having done their duty of polishing off the population of the earth, will then subside and a very peaceful sort of world will ensue, in which all those Jehovah Witnesses, who were alive at the time, will live happily on.

Problems in Paradise

Their conception of the new world is quite childlike. You just go about your ordinary life as you did before but on the level of a social worker's idea of a better world. The real troubles are pushed aside and you have good sanitation, no plagues or big sicknesses or wars. There will be no dangerous animals about; even the obnoxious little ones will be done away with. There will be no excessive heat or cold.

It is surprising however to know that in this future paradise in which you live on forever, you will continue to court, to marry and to have children and apparently to have all the common worries of life. You will have to have a job and you will earn your bread. Will there be discontent? Will there be any naughty people necessitating a police force? They are silent about these things. It sounds pathetic and one is driven to exclaim: 'Who wants to live on forever in such an air-conditioned paradise without hope of anything better ever?'

That is the heaven that the Jehovah Witnesses will enjoy with the exception of the 13,000 who have qualified for the higher spiritual existence. A problem in this new world will be that of over population. The experts who deal in statistics tell us that the population of the world doubles every thirty-seven years and this in spite of all the ailments, wars and earthquakes that continually visit us. Moreover, in that Jehovahland no one will be dying at all. In those circumstances the population will double every year or two. In other words they are going to have a tremendous population in a short time. Where will they find room on the earth after a while? But that question is settled very simply, authoritatively, prophetically and finally for us by the Jehovah Witnesses. At that stage

when living room becomes a difficult problem people will have no more children. It settles itself as easily as that. It is certain that the world is not going to be a brighter place without children.

In addition to those who live through the end of the world, there will be resurrected those Witnesses who had died before that great event happened. They will rise up and they will live this sort of paradise existence that the Jehovah Witnesses paint. There will return to earth the ancient magnificent figures: Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, and the others. And also a number of definitely good people who had died before the Jehovah Witnesses came on earth at all.

What is to be the fate of the remainder of humanity, that inconceivable totality of millions who had lived upon the earth and who had died? Answer: they will be annihilated. They will cease to exist at all because there will be no place to put them in. They have not qualified for the new paradise and there is no Hell to send them to.

Yea, And More Than a Prophet

It cannot be said that the founder of the Jehovah Witnesses was an exemplary character. Russell's marriage ended in the divorce court. After the detailed evidence which was given in support of the application of his wife, the judgment of the court declared that no woman could be expected to put up with the treatment which his wife had received from him. He had admitted, to quote his own phrase, that he fluttered around with any woman who attracted him and it is a testimony to the fairness of the sex that many women did attract him in that way. I have already mentioned his plunges into false prophecy. He also sold 'miracle' wheat at a dollar a pound. A dollar

in those days was worth a lot more than a dollar today, so that you could say that he sold the wheat at £1 per pound. He gave a guarantee with it that its yield would be five times that of common wheat and of course his followers wanted to be in on that sort of bargain, so they bought large quantities of the 'miracle' wheat. The attention of the United States Department of Agriculture was attracted to those glowing promises and they wanted to be in on it too, because it would revolutionise agriculture. They bought a quantity of the wheat and sowed it under good conditions and they watched it.

They found that the yield was exactly normal. They prosecuted Russell but he escaped prison by refunding the money in respect of the purchases. He also sold a cancer cure which consisted of a chloride of zinc paste and I do not have to explain that it was not a success. His speciality in quoting the Bible was to put together texts taken from different parts of the Sacred Books. It has been shown that absolutely anything can be proved by having recourse to this process. A little example of this is the following: 'Judas went out and hanged himself. Go thou and do likewise and what thou doest do quickly. This is the great commandment of God.' That is a sample of what different texts put together can work out to.

Russell died in a train in 1916. It is worth noting that the end of the world had not come in his time.

The Disciple Is Not Above His Master

He was succeeded by Judge Rutherford. Rutherford was not really a judge and had no claim to that title. He had served for four days in a substitute capacity, the judge being absent. He was the clerk of the court and they put him on the bench for those four days. That was enough to

qualify him for the title ever afterwards. He disagreed with much that Russell had taught and proceeded to relegate Russell and most of his teachings to oblivion.

Russell had been a great man for democratic government and believed that the Witnesses should be operated on the principle of one man one vote. Rutherford dissented altogether from this and announced that the Lord Jehovah had informed him that he wished to govern the people of God, that is the Witnesses, directly through Rutherford. God would communicate his wishes and his plans to Rutherford who would tell them to the multitude, a very simple operation.

In general he gave the Witnesses a face-lift and introduced a whole variety of new doctrines. He got into trouble over the 1914-1918 war. He denounced it and he opposed military service and he urged the people of the United States to rebel against their government. For this he served nine months in jail.

One of his ideas was that the word 'God' is quite an improper word. He brought out an edition of the Bible which eliminated that word every place it occurred and he substituted the word Jehovah. He assured all and sundry that Jehovah had a violent objection to being called God and that he would take it out on anybody who ventured to style him by that name.

In 1920 he predicted that the patriarchs of the Old Testament would come on earth in 1925 to usher in the end of the world and the beginning of the new era. He proceeded accordingly to buy a mansion for them in California and he planted the entire estate with palms, olives, figs and other vegetation proper to the Holy Land, so that Abraham, Moses and all the others would feel absolutely at home when they arrived. When they did not

turn up Rutherford became more wary about prophecy and contended himself for the future with the celebrated slogan 'Millions now living will never die'. That is a rather safe prophecy if you think it out, because it would take at least a hundred years and a lot of investigation to disprove his statement. It is one of the extraordinary features of that particular creed that such a flagrant example of false prophecy with the fig trees and olive trees and other embellishments did not upset one of his followers. I leave that to you as a rather remarkable fact.

In 1931, deciding that a good thing should not be wasted, he moved into the mansion in California himself and he lived there until he died in 1942. Some of his followers objected to the mansion and to the lavish style of living that he allowed himself there and also to the nature of his language. We are not given details as to the language.

A Businessman, A Simple Liver

Rutherford was succeeded by Nathan Knorr who still heads the Witnesses and will no doubt be one of our visitors soon. He is a businessman, a simple liver. He has revolutionised the Witnesses. The earlier techniques followed under Russell and Rutherford was that the Witness came to your door and when it was opened he put his foot in the door to prevent it being shut. Then he produced a phonograph and played off a little propagandist piece which was recorded on it. Knorr has done away with the phonograph and with the putting of the foot inside the door. He aims at creating a sort of professional corps which would receive rational argument. But how one could argue rationally about those things I have specified, it is difficult to see. He has suppressed most of Russell's and Rutherford's writings

because they so contradict the generality of the present day teaching of the Witnesses.

The literature issued by the Witnesses is in stupefying quantity, but it bears the name of no author. The reason for this is that Jehovah is supposed to be the author. In other words, you get something written there in one of their publications and that is Jehovah himself telling you the good news.

Less definite prophecies are still indulged in today. Often on their lips are the words: 'The world may come to an end before the clock strikes next.' As well as the time worn one that millions now living will never die.

They have made their own translation of the Bible in which the word God does not appear. This version has been declared by scholars to be beneath contempt. They do not use it in their door-to-door work because it would alienate people. It is utterly amateurish and exists for no other purpose than to bolster up for themselves their own theories.

Reason for Phenomenal Growth

The astounding fact remains that despite their incredible tales, their false prophecies and their doubtful originators, they represent the fastest growing religion on earth. Their publications achieve figures that are colossal by any standards. Five million books issue from their printing presses in different editions annually. Each member of the Jehovah Witnesses is taught to regard himself as a fully ordained priest, bound to spend all his spare time in propaganda. They must take no part in state or local affairs, nor must they vote. The number of what they call 'Publishers,' that is of fully active members who go around publishing the good news, is about one million.

Every fortnight, four million copies of their magazine, *Watchtower* issues in 61 different languages.

The great hate of the movement is for Catholicism though it has given up its earlier practice of picketing the Catholic churches. It makes least progress in places where the proportion of Catholics is high, and that would be a very good reason for their dislike of Catholicism.

In the United States they say that if a knock comes on your door it is either a Fuller Brush salesman or a Jehovah Witness. At this stage a cry of anguish is squeezed out of us: Why do we not show this kind of zeal?

The Witnesses' programme is in tune with this age of ever recurring crises. The atom bomb must have helped them greatly because even the wisest among us do not know what is going to happen. The mention of World War, of the hydrogen bomb and so forth causes the simple to listen to this talk about Armageddon and the painful end of the world. It has been said that no other sect has so completely caught the imagination of the unimaginative. Fantastic propositions and rulings issue from their headquarters and are received as absolute Gospel. The movement progresses rapidly, not because it is irrational but, and this is the tremendous thought, because it is apostolic; because every member goes out and tries to interest people. If such is their success, what could we not do if every Catholic was prepared to be as active as those poor benighted souls.

Their Only Chance

It is our apostolic duty to get in touch with them, to argue with them about some of the absurdities of their creed and to tell them the doctrines of Catholicism. Here are a few things that should be remembered. Every one of

the Catholic doctrines which you know so well and by which you live is there in the scriptures as plain as the proverbial pikestaff. Propose that to them. They will retort on you that you are taking the wrong meanings from the scriptures and they will speak as if we know nothing about the Bible. An effective argument in this situation is the following: All their publications are copyright. They are tremendous on that side of the law. Therefore when they speak to you about scripture, your retort should be: 'That book is ours. You have no right whatever to it. If the copyright laws had been vested permanently in the Catholic Church, we would be in a position to prosecute you for producing an edition of that book.' That is a simple argument which would appeal to them because they understand what copyright means.

Our contact with their weird sect should have one good consequence for us, namely, to cause us to reflect and to ask ourselves if we should not be doing more than we are for our own exquisite faith. Here are these deluded people who set out to convert the world and are prepared to suffer all sorts of hardships, even prison, in the doing, and we, the countless millions of Catholics who possess and really in hearts value the Faith are content to take things very calmly. Many among us are not prepared to lift one finger in active service of the Church, conforming to a minimum below which one cannot go. It is sad.

Let the spectacle of these people be a stimulant to us. Let their coming among us cause us to sorrow for them and to go out and talk lovingly to them and to try to make some impression on them. It is probable that many of them will never again have the chance of having the Catholic faith explained to them.

The Head and the Body Depend on Each Other

The Lay Apostolate is your theme. No more important subject could be treated at the present time. I feel deeply honoured by being asked to play a part in the Jubilee Congress of the Christus Rex Society which has so enterprisingly applied itself to the problems of priests.

We stand at a period which is undoubtedly a crossroads of history. An era is passing away. We confront a new one in regard to which we can make guesses but no more than that. It is a future which is going to be dominated by Asia and Africa. Since about AD 300 our western world has been animated more or less by Christian ideas. These have largely leaked out into the total circulation, so that today all men are living out of inspiration derived from the sweet Lord Jesus even though they do not realise the fact.

But as to that future: There is so little room for the exercise of optimism that one is thrown back entirely on faith and it is in terms of the latter that I approach my subject. The political menace is such as to make all those

old bitter enemies, the European nations, think of coming together again in an up-to-date version of the Roman Empire. The materialistic menace is so rampant that it may be said to have poked at least an icy finger into every man's heart. It has of late produced such monstrosities as the Bishop Robinson and 'God is Dead' movements.

Dogmatic religion has come to the stage of having retired inside the frontiers of the Catholic Church and these frontiers have been steadily contracting. Catholicism has been a diminishing percentage of the world population. It is now 17 per cent. If the graph which has prevailed continues, we will have fallen to 5 per cent at the end of this century – a span so short that the life of Our Lord on earth would cover it. In that case we would not have the right to call ourselves the Catholic Church, which means universal. So for mere survival there has to be a renewal.

Desperate people clutch even at straws and there is the temptation to repose our hopes on the council – not that the council left to itself solves the future. It only delivers a programme. It is only in the measure that it throws the Church into battle array that it means anything; and that is the purpose of the council.

Examine its legislation. Every item, even those which do not look like it, is directed towards the marshalling of the laity. For the higher orders in the Church only exist for the sake of the body of which they form part. Contrariwise, we must beware of regarding the Lay Apostolate as something separate from the Priestly Apostolate as if the two were distinct things. They can be, but this would be equivalent to the organising of an army as two separate bodies, officers and rank and file, each waging its own independent warfare. Such an army, if it did fight at all, would end in a collapse. And so that

army must be one. Officers and ranks must only denote a difference of function, each existing to help the other in their common purpose. Identically the same must apply to priest and laity in the spiritual warfare. All I say is based on that idea, so that for the purposes of my paper the terms 'priestly' and 'lay' are almost interchangeable.

Merely as a practical matter - that is in relation to the task of approaching directly and affecting three thousand millions of people - the notion of the priest working on his own is fantastic. But there is a far more peremptory idea to be taken account of.

The Pauline analogy of the human body necessarily falls short of the unity, diversity and interdependence of the Church. Still as an image it is the best available and it is supremely helpful. I touch on that note of interdependence. If the natural body only functions in part, it will be at the price of partial, or perhaps total, failure. The same role applies to the Mystical Body in a superior degree. The role of the priest is analogous to that of the human head and thus to the Mystical Head. He is so to speak Christ on the spot. He has headship functions which it is not necessary to draw out into detail. But he exists for the body, not for himself alone. Many priests interest themselves little in the apostolate of the body. It has even been formally taught that provided the priest works hard on his own or for his own sanctification alone, he does all that is required of him. No, in failing to give apostleship to the body, the priest would be establishing it in a state of underdevelopment, of half-living according to Pius XI. This insufficiency would frustrate the Church's mission.

That would be bad enough but there is more. Apply again the analogy of the human body, as we are supposed to do. That half-living, or half-dead body, then fails in its

function of supplying life to the head. It communicates its own condition to the head. As an inevitable consequence, the head will be reduced to the spiritual indigence of the body. I stop at this but emphasise the vital importance of the theory.

The council tells us for the first time that the apostolate is a necessary part of the life of the lay person. It is a corollary and a novel idea that the lay apostolate should be equally necessary to the life of the priest. You are a Priests' Society. This aspect is primary for you.

There are further and limitless perspectives. A partial functioning of the Mystical Body will not cope with the problems of the New Age; will not present the true face of Christianity, will not even regard the converting of the world as practicable. It will get no further than documentation, empty calls to arms and futile formulae of co-existence.

I venture to propound some principles relative to those headship functions:

You must gather around you a group of lay people in apostleship.

You must seek to impart to them everything that you have yourself (including your priesthood by inspiring vocations in them or in their families). You must pass out to them as much of your apostolic mission as is compatible with the lay state. If you impart to them less than you can, you fail as the mystical head. And this brings us back to the remorseless cycle that as you fail to give, so you fail to receive.

Your more intimate connection with the general body of the laity will be through that apostolic group. This is by reason of a principle to which I would give the name of Spirited Nucleus. More simply Our Lord called it the leaven.

Pius X once ranked this as the most important element in the health of a community, over and above vocations, Catholic schools, Catholic press, building churches. We are tempted to regard this as exaggeration. But let us reason it out. If you have not got those Spirited Nuclei in your places, the people will be left at the mercy of other spirited nuclei representative of evil movements. These will inevitably triumph. As a consequence there would soon enough be none to fill the churches and schools, to read the Catholic papers and to supply vocations. The Spirited Nucleus is your buffer against attack; your bridge against isolation; your interpreting medium; your Archimedean lever in your individual powerlessness.

The Mystical Body must not only function as a whole; it must be absolutely orthodox. Here I refer particularly to the doctrine of the Blessed Virgin which seems the one most controverted in certain quarters. These in their ardour for reunion with those outside the Church diminish her role and in process do not hesitate to challenge the magisterium. The consequences of that policy, where they have become visible, are intimidating. They are actual fallings away from common doctrine, from practice, from faith. The Blessed Virgin is the neck or the heart of the Mystical Body.

The council teaches that her place in apostleship is primal; an extension of her motherhood of the actual body of Jesus. Therefore those who essay apostleship must do it in her company. This applies to the priest. He is the closest to her function in grace. The priest as the Mystical Head has no effective communication with the body except through her. Furthermore, in the measure that he is in understanding of the union with her, does his contact with the body become closer and more influential.

The Decree on Ecumenism and on the Church in the Modern World invites us to enter into grips with all the religious and secular problems of the world. Association with all groups is to be sought. Catholics must lend their aid to them in every form. This summons is addressed to the laity and to the clergy, not to the latter alone. It creates an extraordinary and delicate position. For the fact has to be faced up to that the ordinary body of the laity are not up to that standard. To be witnesses of the Word to all classes of men, to be safe in the midst of all problems and to seek to turn all those contacts into openings to convert — is beyond the capacity of the casual Catholic. He will only end by attuning himself to those circumstances and in the end perishing in them. If a compass needle is not magnetised, it alters its bearing with every movement of its container. A casual Catholic is an unmagnetised needle. He has never been initiated into his apostolic function. This must be done. He must be given effective direction and inspiration. This will only proceed through adequate organisation.

Granted the right type of organisation, those decrees open up to the priest a fascinating field, more ingenious and absorbing than chess, as exciting as warfare. What more celestial occupation than to imitate the Lord by gathering around one an apostolic band to plan and to penetrate into all those unpromising milieu for the ultimate purpose of Catholicising them.

Here let me urge that the foundation idea must be the wish to convert. If that be absent, absent also would be the element of grace with the result that the work will be of little avail to those whom we approach, and will be of danger to ourselves. Anything without motive power will be taken hold of by the current, including an inert

faith. A modern menace is that of a mere humanism of humanitarianism, which seems to be on the uptake. It is being purveyed as a sort of gospel.

Prima facie, this suggestion of universal conversion is chimerical. Many view it so and their practical interpretation of those decrees, and also of the Decree on the Church in the Mission-field, is that they only have in mind the exerting of an 'influence'. But if the ordinary Catholics are thrown into those most difficult religious, intellectual and economic spheres on a basis of no more than mere co-existence, they will be lost. For their immediate suitability to those conditions is exactly that of the man on the street to a battlefield. As he stands he is actually useless. Then can nothing be done? Do those decrees represent no more than window dressing? Oh no. They restate the global commandment of Our Lord: Go off and get in touch with every man on earth and tell him about me. And those who believe, you are to baptise in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, as one would expect in regard to a divine injunction, the proposition is a practical one if approached on proper lines. And those lines I now proceed to discuss.

Any old way will not serve. The formidable degree of failure which attended the drive of Pius XI towards Catholic Action illustrates this. It is to be noted that whole hierarchies threw their weight in behind that drive, including the supplying of good direction and equipment. One would imagine that in such circumstances the Holy Spirit would *ex officio* enter in. But apparently he will not, if certain ingredients are missing.

It may be said: You speak of the uselessness of the untrained man in war. Does this not apply fully to the spiritual warfare? Are not careful training and formation

essential? As a reply to this would land us into quite a discussion, I must short-circuit it by a little credo of my own: We must not interpret formation as a classroom system or as some form of intellectualism. For that would turn apostleship into a reserve of the elect. Nor should we presume that a brimming piety automatically overflows on to others in the shape of apostleship. It was such misunderstandings as these which led to the failure of so much of Catholic Action despite all the devotion lavished on it. More ingredients go towards the making up of apostolic material than the speaking of words. So many indeed that the advance writing down of an apostolic prescription is impossible. It has to be compiled from analysing something which has succeeded, much after the way in which penicillin was devised. I refrain from specifying all the ingredients which I would regard as necessary, lest it be supposed that I was using this august occasion to promote a certain brand of apostolic merchandise. But the fact remains that success has been won, and with average human material, and on a world wide scale, and which shows itself capable of being indefinitely increased.

Apostleship must be wedded to doctrine so closely that the latter forms its roots. In Christ and subject to his own union with his mother, we carry on his apostolate. This must be the immediate motive, constantly renewed by appropriate prayer and thought. If it is not a spiritualised apostolate that we carry on, it will not achieve a spiritual conquest.

Witnessing to Christ must mean vastly more than 'giving good example' – which lay people used to be assured was the only apostolate they had to fulfil. This idea that if we conduct ourselves reasonably well, onlookers will be

induced to think, 'I must join that person's religion,' would be pathetic if it were not so disastrous. It provides the perfect justification for doing what nature bids us to do, which boils down to nothing. Thereby is the Church laid waste.

Above all, we are not to make that costly modern mistake of equating apostleship and knowledge. The two are not the same thing. And they may even be independent of each other. It is possible to have a great zeal for souls and at the same time a real reluctance to get into direct touch with them. This can easily happen in the case of a writer or a professor. It could come from shyness or a fear of the unknown. It is just as likely that apostleship will become learned as it goes along as that learning will become apostolic. I cite the case of two of my friends, who were quite uneducated, as representative of an immense class who have not education but possess extraordinary capacity to get in touch with people and win them over. This is not sufficiently appreciated. On one occasion I gave a talk on one of those men whom I have just specified. After it a priest and three laymen who were working with him, came up and attacked me for striking a wrong note in apostleship. But they do not realise that book learning as a basis for apostleship condemns us to an army of officers without soldiers, a select body which will never get beyond the stage of skirmishing.

Of course we must strike to improve our material. Any worthwhile system will work constantly towards that end. But our standards must be proportioned to our aim of reaching every soul. They must not be such as to keep people out, or to drive them out. Dependence on the well versed person as the typical apostle means that the whole world of souls cannot be approached as commanded by

Our Lord. Indeed such a comprehensive campaign is only theoretically possible if the entire nominal Catholic population of the world is mobilised to a conversion programme. The population of the world is three thousand million, and of the Catholic Church five hundred million, that is one in six. It is even straining a point to suggest that one apostle could convert five persons. But all things are possible to God!

The objection will come: But 90 per cent of the Catholic flock is non-practising and yet you are counting them as apostles! Yes, that is true. Is it to be acquiesced in that they should remain in their state of degradation? They should be what they are supposed to be as Christians; that is practising and apostolic. Note that in the 1930s the Philippines were non-practising. Now they are in the main practising. There are 6,000 branches of the Legion there and they have adopted the slogan: 'Asia for Christ though the Philippines'. Brazil, about 20 years ago a certain mark for Communism, is now fighting back. It has 5,000 praesidia which grow rapidly. Likewise in many other lost lands! With the right machinery it is easily possible to turn the non-practising and non-Catholic into apostolic material.

Having discussed the question of learning and non-learning, I now go on to say that neither will accomplish anything, nor even attempt apostleship, without the pressure of organisation. The council legislation, while insisting that every Catholic must be apostolic in some form, suggests that this will only be realised through organisation.

The organising of seminarians into the apostolate has been spearheaded by the Legion. The results are excellent. Why not the nuns as well? The Assistant Mother General

of one foreign order came to Dublin, donned civvies, and worked with the legionaires for several weeks at every class of work including the street work. Here we see significant approaches to the welding of the entire Church into an apostolic machine. I repeat: the Mystical Body must work as a whole.

We have been speaking of approach to all men for the purpose of conversion and of a taking in hand of all the problems of mankind. For this is what is envisaged in the full range of the council's decrees. In order to show that the council's blueprint is not a mere airy fairy business, it is necessary to present examples which would indicate that such total conquest is possible. This I now do. If it be thought that I have not covered enough ground, I could extend it. In talking to a large gathering of bishops in Rome, I did extend it greatly.

In North-West Scotland over two years, nine priests and 88 lay folk went to every home and explained Catholic doctrine. Prophecy had been unanimous that such an approach would be resisted by violence. One bishop had refused permission for his territory on the grounds that he did not wish to add a lot of Irish names to the martyrology. The enterprise was a unique success. Practically everyone was willing to listen and many seemed to have been waiting for the Catholic message. In particular it had been alleged that the approach of the priests would stir up mania. After some disconcerted moments they were well received.

In Copenhagen 12 lay people devoted two weeks to speaking to persons on the streets who did not appear to be in a hurry. Their apostolate was from 12 a.m. to 10 p.m. with intervals for meals. The result: 1,200 really interested contacts, with about 150 promising to initiate

the Catholic Enquiry Centre correspondence. Note that it is always contended that the Scandinavians have no faith, are cold and are specially unapproachable on the subject of religion.

A young Irish girl living in Sweden declares it to be wide open for Catholicism. This is based on her own considerable experience. Every day she has made a point of speaking to 10 different persons on the subject of Catholicism. So far she has encountered one real rebuff only.

An area of tolerated prostitution and general horror, in existence for about 120 years, was closed down in two years by a straightforward religious campaign. Practically all the misdemeanants were absorbed in a lasting conversion. In another locality at about the same time the conversion at a stroke of 23 street girls, living in one house, was effected. Only one of these cases appeared subsequently to have a less happy issue.

The Mercier Society anticipated the Dialogue by 27 years. It was free from leaning backward, from compromise or co-existence. During its career of three years it brought in several conversions and more have come in since.

There has been a mass-resistance to the Communist persecution in China, entailing death, or the equivalent to death, to a vast number.

There has been success in mobilising the primitive peoples to apostleship. The Decree on the Church in the Mission-field insists that this be done, but it was already in operation since 1931.

Some 3,000 Mohammedans in the Congo have been converted. In other places, many similar conversions have occurred, although religion is supposed to be impermeable.

One girl in one visit to Russia put 600 persons the question: 'What do you think of God?' She records that she did not receive one hostile answer; that she was dealing with people perplexed by the problems created by atheism and who would be anxious to be able – as they said – to believe in God; that it would give meaning to life!

Over four or five years the parish of Tuosist, 22 miles long, in Co. Kerry, on the brink of extinction being without marriages or births or industry, was given heart and put into vigorous life by the application of the principles known as True Devotion to the Nation.

Is the organising required for this mobilisation difficult, special, needing expertness and involved training? Not unless we want to make it difficult, as so many do want. The process is quite natural if we will only view it supernaturally. Jesus Christ gathered around himself about 120 persons and committed them to an apostolic course without so far as can be discerned, any elaborate formation. He gave them an ideal, a mission and a command. His Spirit entered into them and a fissuring process ensued to which ultimately we owe our own faith.

That initial grouping for apostleship under the auspices of Our Lord himself was not intended to be unique. The fissuring proves that. It was meant to be a pattern for the behaviour of every one of his future priests, the local Christs. If they do not fit themselves to that pattern, then they do not accommodate themselves to Christ, no matter how energetic their manoeuvres may be.

But when they do gather around them the people of God and say to them: 'Behold our hands full of the treasures of redemption, help us to scatter them abroad' – then Jesus is no less among them than of old. But he is present on

the old conditions, that is by the intermediary, and not without it, of his Mother Mary, Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix and Mediatrix. The ancient wonder reproduces itself and the days of unlimited conquest come again. It seems to me to be as simple as that.

Modernising the Legion

A lot of people have got it into their heads that the Legion of Mary must be updated, as they put it. So let me say something about the modernisation of the Legion. Numbers are found expounding that theory. But that is not quite the same thing, we have found, as saying that they are interested in the Legion. Because from an examination of their suggestions I have to declare my conviction that the vast majority of them do not proceed from what could be called a first class interest in the Legion. Some of them are disgraceful, anarchical.

When suggestions for reform are made, it is imperative to look back to the early ideas of the Legion and to see how new ones fit in. So, I return to the first meeting. Viewed from now, it forms an interesting inspection. There was a sureness of touch and a confidence as to the future. Those people were planning for distant days. As one example: It was not at the moment possible to take in men and that for a very practical reason. We were meeting in Vincent de Paul premises by the kindness of that society. If we proceeded to take men into the new society, it would

have been a definite act of rivalry, unthinkable in the circumstances. But men were included in that gaze into the future and it was insisted at that first meeting that the Legion was equally for men and for women.

In the second place, the remarkable feature stands out that there was no temporising spirit in that group of doers and planners.

That in itself is amazing to think over, for surely if they were anxious to gain numbers, as they were, they will tone down what they demand to what they are likely to get? No, they were concerned only with that they themselves were willing to give. Others who would enter would have to conform to that.

At this point let us suppose the *modern* attitude to what was proposed at that first meeting. There would be protest: 'You are asking for too much! The Rosary is unthinkable. No active society uses it at meetings! It would take precious time from the consideration of the work! Besides a weekly meeting and a weekly work are just too much! Thereby you condemn yourself to a select and small membership. Furthermore, this extravagant notion of the Blessed Virgin upon which you are founding your work will debar you from numbers and most probably from Ecclesiastical approval!'

And there would seem to be sense in such objections. The circumstances of that time must not be judged from the standpoint of the present when the Legion system is so accepted.

The facts were then as follows: Apostleship was regarded as a counsel of perfection; it is only now that the council insists that it is a *Christian obligation*. At that time there were only about 50 ladies in Dublin who were carrying on apostolic action in the ranks of the Ladies' Association of

Charity. It was universally held that apostleship did not appeal to the fair sex. Furthermore, the True Devotion of St Louis Marie de Montfort was practically unknown. Unquestionably people would not be prepared to accept it as a standard.

If that original scheme, inspired by the True Devotion, had been issued in the form of a prospectus it would have met with a storm of disagreement.

So it would then have been reasonable to object to those requirements as excessive. Yet there was not a word of protest from the band. And the same attitude characterised what followed – the growing of the Legion. For it did grow, contrary to those gloomy forecasts that we have been imaging. Far from doubting as to the accuracy of its course, the Legion grew more confident as it went along. It had not been thinking too big after all, for it saw numbers coming in. Its horizons expanded; it began to use its slogans, now so familiar to you; to talk audaciously of going to every man, a programme which would entail a simply colossal membership. So the parallel slogan was produced at an early date when Monsignor Deery declared that the potential membership of the Legion was equal to the Catholic population. A very daring idea at the time! Even now many outside the Legion would still regard that as empty dreaming. But it is a dream which is in process of coming true.

Now just a word of comment on that extensive proposition. How can we hope to get all Catholics into membership considering that only about ten per cent of the world's Catholic population is practising? But they *should* be practising, and they *should* be apostolic and we *must make* them so. At this our friend, the practical man, protests indignantly: 'Come down to earth. Have

commonsense.' But strange to say, the idea is practical. For example, in the 1930s the Philippines were non-practising. Now there are 6,000 praesidia there with more than 75,000 active members. Brazil and other imperilled countries are staging the same happy anomaly. So after all those fantastic legionary ideas seem to have something in them. The Legion is able to transform non-practising and non-Catholics into active members.

Moreover, in the earliest documentary presentation of itself, the Legion insisted on quality as the key to eventual numerical strength, just as it likewise insisted that its alleged extravagant devotion to Mary was only a norm, below which one should not and indeed could not, safely descent. The council promulgation on Mary would appear to constitute support for this point of view.

Likewise the Legion was so convinced that there was not too much prayer in its system that it soon added the auxiliary degree and then the praetorians and adjutorians, anticipating the council's legislation on the Liturgy.

I have mentioned certain additions to the Legion system. This brings up the question as to whether the Legion is receptive of proposals for improvement. Empathically it is. The Legion eagerly welcomes proper suggestions and considers them most anxiously, for in each one may lie something helpful and perhaps the germ of a great new work. From its beginning the Legion was not only growing in numbers, but was also fertile in ideas. It has been unceasingly prolific of new works. This process is a continuing one. Let us hope it will always characterise the Legion.

I give you just a few names to show you the importance of that aspect: The adjutorians, the Patricians, the Peregrinatio Pro Christo, the Viatores and True Devotion

to the Nation. Actually the Legion is like an ever budding tree, producing all the time, without – as far as can be seen – any final borders in that respect.

But that incredible fruitfulness proceeds from its scheme and depends upon it. So be careful about the *essence* of the Legion. Especially let us be solicitous about Our Blessed Lady who might be described as the *quintessence* of the Legion. 'Quintessence' is a chemist's term for the essence of the essence.

So I go back to her. That first group was clear in its mind about her. It saw her as de Montfort did, and it has seen her that way ever since. It is intriguing that the Legion should start immediately after what I might call a 'Patrician discussion' on the subject of the True Devotion, as if the minds of the future members had to be fully acclimatised to Mary before they were fit for membership; before they could *become* the Legion of Mary. Any suggestion that its Marian scheme should be toned down would have seemed preposterous to those early legionaries and their successors.

Indeed the idea would be the opposite. Having glimpsed her glory and tasted the fruits of her leadership, they wanted more not less. In actual fact no suggestion to minimise Mary was ever made in the Legion until quite recently and then as part of the turbulence which we have been considering. Perhaps it is a consequence of, or a penalty for, that incorrect trend that quite a rash of other reforming propositions has broken out. These touch everything in the Legion and they contradict the whole course of legionary tradition. They all involve diminutions. They are proposed in the alleged interest of making the Legion more acceptable to those outside, and therefore increasing its membership and also of making the Legion easier on its existing members.

There is an element of stupefying contradiction about this phenomenon of unsettlement at a time when all the original ideas of the Legion have been so completely justified, not merely by successful practice but by the council legislation. It has been proved that strength of membership could be built on those principles; that the simplest people could understand them; that Mary is no barrier but the necessary mother and that a degree of conquest unprecedented and un contemplated could be achieved.

Can we assign a cause for this unexpected and inconsistent germination of theories which are so opposed to the current of legionary life? Probably it was linked with the council itself and the preparation for it. We see that there has been a disturbance of minds in the Church and that a lot of festering thought has suddenly burst forth. While making all allowances for the desirability of enterprising thinking, I think it will have to be agreed that many persons have gone too far. Everything in the Church has been attacked and in a definitely nasty way. The Eucharist and Our Lady have been the chief subjects of this perversion, but the papacy has followed close behind. One is distressingly reminded of the tone which characterised the instigators of the Protestant Reformation. Some have even feared that we were facing a second such manifestation; that many were making ready to leave the Church. From that consummation we seem, thanks to the inspired action of the present tenant of the papacy, to have been saved. But the price of retaining in the Church elements that are somewhat out of sympathy will be that we will suffer torment from them. This forms a dolorous consideration for the after council time.

Now we in the Legion have to see that the Legion is not destroyed and that it is not too much tormented. A part of that process of safeguarding lies in keeping before us our beginnings, tradition and principles. A phrase from the Council Decree on Adaptation and Renewal of the Religious Life is particularly applicable to this position. I quote it for you: 'It redounds to the good of the Church that institutes have their own particular characteristics and work. Therefore let their founders' spirit and special aims be kept before them and their sound traditions be faithfully held in honour.' Among these founders whose mentality is to be so carefully preserved I specify – as a remote one – St Louis Marie de Montfort. For secondary reasons, persons commonly put his treatise on the True Devotion away from them. I mean that they are not attracted by the Consecration or Slavery which he proposes and so they think they have nothing to learn from him or his book. That is an error which is costly to them. Thereby they miss the treasure which the book offers. Here is what Cardinal Tedeschini says on the subject: 'He has given us a Mariology such as no one before him has conceived. So deeply has he explored the roots of Marian devotion, so widely has he extended its horizons and he has become without question the announcer of all the modern manifestations on Mary – from Lourdes to Fatima, from the Definition of the Immaculate Conception to the Legion of Mary.' On the foundation of that Mariology of his, he has built his special devotion, but the two things, foundation and building are different. It is legitimate to refuse the special devotion, but it is disastrous to reject along with it his splendid Mariology.

The adhering to our traditional guiding lines has already brought us far, and a greater career and adventure is

opened up to us as a result of the council. I would say that the Legion is one of the big thoughts which the council fathers carried home with them to their territories. In part this is due to the endorsement given by the legislation to the Legion type of organisation; in part because the Legion seems to stand out as the obvious instrument for implementing all that council legislation, which insists so imperatively on the need for the co-operation of the People of God.

I have given you a sort of snapshot of that earlier idealism of the Legion. We must steer our future course according to it. In the recent edition of the handbook, which contains new items of a proper updating character, you will find some quotations from the council legislation. These will show you how up-to-date the Legion has been. For instance, the first attempt at a Constitution of the Church sets forth a description of Our Lady's providential role which sounds like a paraphrase of the handbook's depicting of that same thing. Much the same would apply to the other legionary features. Take any of them, then consult the legislation and you will find that it is there endorsed in some form or another. The council seems to confirm the Legion and its up-to-datedness. An analysis of the various decrees does not reveal anything which would seem to call for a readjustment of the Legion system. So it looks a little as if what is being demanded is not for improvement but for change's sake. Bear this in mind when you hear those confident utterances about revising and modernising. Those who talk in this vein may be only reformers in the improper sense of that word. If so, it is essential that they seek their ideals outside the Legion, where they will be unfettered.

True Devotion to the Nation

This should be an auspicious occasion. We have returned to our birthplace, Myra House, this time as owners. Moreover, it is in happy circumstances that is for the holding of this Pentecostal Conference, out of which in the past has flowed important developments for the Legion. May we hope that this one is destined to be as fruitful. It is not so easy to value the conference at this moment. There were many things which should not have been brought up at all – defects of praesidia and the like which are matters for the Curia or a Congress, whereas we should have been treading higher paths. The best way to improve a mediocre praesidium is to inspire. It springs from a sense of the greatness of one's mission. A restricted outlook can stifle inspiration. Thus our apostolate must be seen in its full dimension and this we would believe entails the programme known as True Devotion to the Nation.

If I had doubts as to the success of this conference, they would be dispelled when I cast my mind back over

the preceding events of the kind. In 1958 the first TDN Conference took place. There was quite revulsion of feeling at it. Many were distressed, angry: they felt that a menace was being directed at the life of their beloved society; that time honoured ideas were being hurled overboard and that an unjustifiable revolution was being launched in the Legion. Numbers of you here were present on that occasion. To some extent those fears were allayed before the end of that conference. They persisted in certain quarters. But where today has there been a trace of such dissent?

Where life is expanding and seeking outlets, one must expect such situations. New ideas insert themselves and develop, causing anxiety. Then they slip simply into their place and it is seen that they have filled an unperceived gap. Definitely there is in the Legion a principle of orderly growth, of design not our making, which is both touching and strengthening because it suggests the care of a maternal power.

First Baby Cry

The Legion came into existence in the upper room at the end of this hall. It is the original statue which stands before you. The first baby cry was a declaration of its dependence on Our Blessed Mother. From that moment its attitude towards her was distinctive and in a fashion pierced the future. In June 1921 Pope Benedict XV had granted the Feast and Office of Our Lady, Mediatrix of All Graces. It is remarkable that a few months later the infant Legion was building itself on that doctrine and with reasonable understanding of it. It was a true case of the duck entering into water and finding itself in its element. The word 'Mediatrix' was not used at that first meeting, nor until sometime later when the legionaries learned of that papal

grant. But from the first moment they had the inner essence of it. They understood it in the perfect way of being able to put it into practice. Out of that knowledge of her emerged the Legion scheme. The doctrine of the Mystical Body was only properly grasped as the result of trying to understand her. Then with the doctrine of the Mystical Body came all its light on the nature of the Church, the true basis of the apostolate, the function of the sacramental system and prayer. All of these ingredients go to make up what we call the life of the Legion. Mary our mother still maintains that legionary fabric and it will strengthen or weaken according to the Legion's appreciation of her. The Legion always realised that she was no mere devotion in the Church, but a necessary part of Christianity itself, conjoined to Our Lord and made by him a condition of the imparting of his grace. The *De Ecclesia* decree, which is the first effort on the part of the Church to draw up a Constitution for itself, affords an astounding endorsement of that Legion attitude in all its aspects.

Let me mention one or two of its more striking details. One is that Mary must be taught to the world; that Catholics must understand her essential maternal role. Having grasped it themselves, they must pass it on to those outside the Church for these are likewise her children; her separated but dearly beloved children to whom she is truly a mother. That is an idea which we have always been proposing. It derives from Leo XIII but has been imagined to be a Legion idea. Now it is promulgated by the Church as part of Catholic doctrine.

Queen of Apostles

Another of those supposedly Legion ideas now endorsed is that Mary is Queen of Apostles in the sense that the

apostolate depends on her, so that her co-operation in all work for souls, including those outside the Church, must be sought. Success depends on that co-operation which she will give if she is asked.

As she has that special part in Christianity, so she is the key to our problem of today: True Devotion to the Nation. In the mystical Nazareth it is still a question of Mary tending her Son. She is not interested alone in feeding him and unfolding his mind. She is solicitous about every aspect of his life; his physical welfare, his comfort, his recreation, all things which would surround him and affect his life. She sees him in all men. She looks on his life as a whole. It would be intolerable for her if he should be afflicted in any department. It is certain that she would wish to remedy anything which was wrong. And this is the basis of True Devotion to the Nation.

Of course first things rank first. The essence of everything is the spiritual, the divine things. But the body is inextricably entwined with the soul and the material things with the spiritual; each affects the other. It is not properly possible for us to concern ourselves only with the soul of a person. Love does not think along such lines of restriction. You love the whole person and you long to serve him in every way. It would constitute a peculiar position to talk religion to a person and to be indifferent to his misery. A natural mother would not act in that way towards her child and neither would Mary towards her mystical child. We are supposed to be the agents of Mary, tending her child, united to her action. We must be as Our Lady to the community.

But I insist there is no abandonment of our traditional scheme. There is no dropping of our spiritual programme, but only an intensification of it. We have not relaxed our

rule against the giving of material relief. In fact we have become progressively strengthened in regard to it. We believe it to be our bulwark against the mere humanism which has absorbed so much of the Catholic apostolate. Too much of the alleged apostolate of today is but a cult of the material even though a spiritual gloss be imparted to it. With sufficient agencies devoted to the giving of material relief, it is vital that the Legion should remain constant to its aim of seeking first the kingdom of God. TDN is an effort to do this and then to reach out to the 'other things'. This order of values is essential. The spiritual must be the motive. The prevailing tendency is to rule out that motive and to commit the people's lives to secular and technical handling. This is not even a distant relation to Christianity and we must energetically try to impart true balance.

But 'material relief' is to be correctly interpreted. It does not include that rendering of services to the individual and the community which constitute TDN. While our great preoccupation is the spiritual, it must not be viewed too narrowly, for that spiritual concerns all life. All life springs from it and ministers to it. If we are to distinguish between what is primary and secondary, it should not result in the neglecting of either. If we are dealing with the secondary aspects stressed in True Devotion to the Nation, it must not be to the detriment of the primary one. We must not for a moment lose sight of the soul. It is to the soul that we are really addressing ourselves through the means which we use, each of which should be viewed as a lever to uplift faith, to promote moral good.

Mary's Outlook Must Be Ours

Mary's own outlook must be ours. Whether she was attending to Jesus himself or to the more remote operations

of running her home, she always had the interests of the Holy Trinity in clear focus. So in any situation where we are in doubt, think of her, how she would act and she will give us true direction. The legionary must see Jesus in his neighbour, who is all mankind and then must serve him in every way, using each way to lead people on to proper levels of religion. Too much of common Catholicism is a veneer. I do not say that it is insincere but it does not go deep enough to influence the ordinary life.

Included in that process of Christianising must be the making of one's place more happy, more prosperous, more beautiful, more enlightened; the creating of employment and the stopping of emigration.

One of the special means of aiding in that process would be the fostering of honest dealing in every shape. So dislocating is the defect in this department that I have wondered if a 10 per cent improvement in common honesty would not bridge the gap which separates the impoverishment of the world from a modest comfort.

If this is fulfilment of duty to the Church and to one's neighbour, it is likewise patriotism. This word opens up before us unknown, uncharted territory, for what is true patriotism? There is no model of it in the world. The nearest is the brand of self-sacrifice and devotion which develops during a war. But this is motivated by hate more than by love and appropriately it is directed towards destroying. So it is imperative that a correct model be somewhere provided.

This is doubly necessary having regard to the way in which the modern state tends to widen its functions. Animated usually with the best intentions, it seeks to manipulate people's minds. It moves more and more towards thinking for each one, arranging his life in detail.

By a creeping process it is appropriating to itself rights which Christianity has always regarded as belonging to the individual.

A Modern Menace

This could work out to be a pure tyranny. The modern idea attributes to the 'state' quasi-omnipotence. Governments honestly imagine that they have an unlimited power over the citizens. This could prove intolerable even if operated on lines of true democracy. But often enough it's a case of the dictatorship of a few persons.

This has all the colour of the menace described in that novel *1984*, where Big Brother looks into every room through a television apparatus and supervises everything for the 24 hours of the day. It is towards something like that dismal position that the state idea is steadily slipping. More and more is being taken into its scope. Possibly this may result in providing for every material need. But analysed, such an improvement looks dangerously like a comfortable slavery. And inevitably that evolution will clash with the Catholic Church, which ultimately has to insist on certain rights for the individual, believing that God has given those rights. 'From the useful institution which it was, the national state has become the threat to civilisation that it now undoubtedly is.' These words are not mine but Arnold J. Toynbee's.

That tendency towards taking over by the state is largely due to the passivity of the citizens. Having been taught no sense of responsibility in respect of the defects around them, they do nothing towards remedying them. So it is inevitable that the state is forced to intervene in regard to the greater evils. Then the intervention and the inertia are both progressive. The citizen fades away into a cipher

put into a computer which will decide what is to be done with him.

If the people had shown a proper sense of responsibility, much of this would have been avoided and healthy communities would be the result. Most of the graver problems are due to maladjustment of some kind and would yield to principles of self-help and Christian behaviour. So there is no need for the individual to forfeit his rights to the state in order to be able to live.

But this is a truth which must be practically demonstrated. This is of such importance that God will help if we but play our part. The lack of a model in this particular case results disastrously in the absence of any idea as to what patriotism is. In the case of say flying, the correct theory was present long before the practical model was attained. People understood what flying meant. They knew its laws and indeed everything about it. The one thing missing was an engine which could lift more than its own weight. The moment the internal combustion engine was discovered, the problem of flight was solved; all the laws and principles were ready. The usual procedure is that the idea precedes the working model and eventually the model emerges. But it is different in that case of patriotism where there has been neither the proper idea nor the working model.

What is Patriotism?

Then what is patriotism? What is its basis, its motives, its scope? This degree of uncertainty declares it to be an unknown quantity. It will be understood either as:

That wartime formula; or as

A sentimental conception without rational

roots. As such it will be seen as a mere rivalry and rejected by sensible men;
Or as a device for exploiting people. Dr Sam Johnson defined patriotism as the last refuge of a scoundrel.

Therein lies the extreme importance of True Devotion to the Nation. It is the practical working model which teaches us the correct theory of Christian patriotism and shows how it is to be applied. If it can be made to prevail, it would usher in a revolution infinitely greater than that produced by the discovery of the steam engine or electricity or atomic science, because it is in the superior moral order. One helping circumstance is that everybody is at least in a hazy searching for such a thing; nobody is satisfied with those common conceptions of nationhood.

For all its defects, Ireland is in this matter the best off by reason of its having faith. If we could ameliorate our position in a worthy and striking way, we would secure imitation from the world which seems to be wheezing to death in terrible convulsions. We would qualify as that nation visualised in the handbook, which solved its problems and as a matter of automatic consequence attracts the other nations to learn from it. Moreover and more important it would afford convincing evidence as to the power of Christianity so much derided today as an obsolete superstition.

There is a further reason why the Legion must enter on this new territory of TDN. Big changes are about to accomplish themselves in the apostolate. Certain aspects of it have been seen to be based excessively on the economic and material. Many of them repudiate any programme of converting. If in certain places the Legion

is taken up instead of those other apostolates, it will be required to undertake works which they had specialised in. Through TDN the Legion is enabled to attend to them inside its own framework of motives and method.

There is another reason why we must work TDN vigorously. Perhaps it is due to the Legion's vivid projection of the apostolic idea that there is a surge of new societies and humanitarian projects around us. Most of them have no religious note in them. Add on new efforts by Communism and Protestantism. So that if we do not go at once into that field we may find it largely taken over by those agencies. This would be serious as presenting that position deplored in the handbook where we had been anticipated and out-soldiered. Also it would mean that certain works are being left at the mercy of purely human motives. How far will these bring us?

Ireland – The Taking-Off Ground

But a paramount reason lies in the necessity of the country which is the taking-off ground for this project – Ireland. Let us be frank about it: There is nothing in the country which could be described as a national idealism. There is a poor realisation of duty or service of the community. It would be a great mistake to think that our problems are mainly economic. Actually there is much money flowing, hundreds of millions of borrowed money among it. It is difficult to get labour. There is much drinking and misconduct. There is insufficient public spirit. There is a determined and partly unnecessary emigration. There are jobs available but the people are determined to go. Patriotism should be showing itself in some sort of dutifulness towards one's country, at the very least in a willingness to stay in it. But that is not in evidence. Some

aspects resemble anarchy. Definitely there is at work a malady which, if it is not cured, will kill us spiritually and probably nationally.

A group of us have just come back from a short trip which involved the staying in a different place every night. I would not say that it evidenced a consoling religious position. In two of the places eleven people were at Holy Communion in the morning of which we were seven. In another at Sunday's Mass the priest appealed that everyone should go at least monthly to Holy Communion and he pleaded that people be not ashamed of being seen going to the altar rails! This in the era of daily Communion!

That rural inadequacy compares badly with the adjutorian degree which the Legion is proposing to the general body of the people, namely daily Mass, Holy Communion, all the Legion prayers and the saying of an Office. With backing, that programme could be made to sweep Ireland.

In those localities one felt that the life of religion had reached an irreducible minimum and that it is not presenting the true face of Christianity. If there are any idealistic impulses stirring in those communities, they are not derived from religion. Nor are those places capable of withstanding a moral or religious attack. Yet they are leisured, nothing stirring in the early part of the day and thus affording scope for the adjutorians, the Patricians etc. The Patricians is a positive necessity; it is an efficient way of teaching the adults their religion. Need I add that there are no praesidia in those places?

All that sounds bad. But we are far from being the only victims of a misunderstood civilisation. All the other countries are suffering similarly, or far worse. In a recent issue the London *Times* published a survey of conditions

on the English countryside. It shows a like unsavoury stagnation, but deprived of the religious note which at least we have. Beer, weekly Bingo and a discontent with one's surroundings: These constitute a fine formula for the warping of human material.

A better order does not spring up of itself. There must be some force to animate it. But not all such forces are good. For instance, a Communist cell would be an energising influence. It would be a bad one, but it would certainly set things moving in various ways. It would start every sort of hare-brained schemes: plans for reform, schemes of taking over the property of the 'rich', promises to give something to everybody. And somewhere in the picture would be the weaning of people from that enemy of progress, religion!

The Formula – A Well-Worked Praesidium

That stirring, that animating must be done. But it must be approached on correct lines; that is for Christian ends and out of Christian motives. My formula for that animating principle would not exactly constitute a 64 dollar question because you all know the answer. It is a well-worked praesidium. I do not suggest that the Legion is the only animating principle. But it is the only large-scale, recognised one which carries the religious motive to its full logical conclusion. It does not base its apostolate on a vague appeal to Christian humanitarianism which could mean absolutely nothing. Even unbelievers constantly have that word 'Christian' on their lips. The Legion proposes as motive power the doctrine of the Mystical Body in all its detail, including of course Our Lady. This doctrine obliges us to think in terms of every person in each place and of all aspects of life there; cultural, economic, recreational and of development in every sense.

Commonly the absence of unemployment is regarded as denoting prosperity, so that the people do not bestir themselves towards development. That apparent prosperity is fictitious because those places are providing for their children by the simple method of emigrating them. The resulting position is the opposite to true prosperity. For a community, like a family, should normally provide for its children. This can only be done by a continuous development of industry in all its forms.

All this must not amount to selfish localism. It must be expansive. People solving their problems in a small country place, must at the same time be thinking of the whole country. More than that, there should be a holy internationalism. Here I point to the movements which the Legion has produced. They emerged in a particular place, but a pendant or essential thought was: How are we going to apply this to the whole world? Just now you are witnessing this legionary instinct at work in the *Peregrinatio Pro Christo* and the *Viatores Christi*. To the extent that we progress with True Devotion to the Nation it will similarly be utilised for the benefit of the world.

Is it necessary to point out that this sort of thing, done all over a country, builds up into Christian patriotism? Necessarily that Christian love must concentrate initially on the people one meets, but it must ambition to help all men. If patriotism is basically religion, then the Legion is the best organisation to implement it because it unites the two ideas.

There is also a primary psychological consideration to be reckoned with. Man is not meant to be alone. In the individual resides an extraordinary quality of helplessness. It must be supplemented if he is to be made effective even in the mildest degree. This defectiveness is at its greatest in

the moral order. But the gaining of a helper makes all the difference. A few working together stimulate each other on to courage and conquest. As a special exemplification of this I again give the case of Communism. A handful of them can take possession of and control a nation. They accomplish this by binding themselves together in a tight, single-minded unity, and then by striking at any unity outside themselves. Thereby they throw the population into individual isolation and consequent helplessness. The mechanism for this is universal spying and fear. No one has any real communication with others and therefore cannot lean on them; is afraid even to express his thoughts to another.

That effected, the highly organised few can do what they like. It is because they correctly recognise in the Legion a counter principle that Communism fears the Legion. The Legion works for religion instead of against it, for unity instead of division; exhibits the martyr spirit instead of weakly yielding. True the Legion cannot avail of the Communist mechanism of secrecy, spying and fear, but love and grace will outweigh those things. If a sufficient number be induced to assert themselves, it becomes impossible to suppress a whole people like a flock of sheep.

In what way is the foregoing applicable to a Christian community? Suppose a Communist cell to be operating there. It would not have the power to force its will by direct action. In these circumstances it would not sail under its true colours. It would work with supreme effectiveness by creating a wrong atmosphere, one of cynicism, of quiet pressure; jeering at any sort of idealism, at patriotism as a narrow, outmoded sentiment; at religion as a superstition which has been disproved by science; and

so forth. Religion can be put completely on the defensive in places like those previously pointed to, where there is no praesidium, no Patricians and where the people are ashamed to be seen going to Holy Communion! Surely there is some malign activity there! I do not say that Communism is at the bottom of all those rotten attitudes. There are other agencies.

It is a matter of life and death that we organise on proper lines. The praesidium is perfect for that. It brings together persons on a basis which more or less excludes really unworthy elements, that is, it summons them to prayer and disagreeable tasks. Then it educates them in the full Christian philosophy, doctrinal and practical. Soon they understand each other and this is the beginning of action. They realise too that their ideas are held by many in the community. In this feeling of unity lies strength. If that praesidium works faithfully according to its principles, it can accomplish good. Better still it can enable good to overpower evil.

Definitely there is some moral force in the Legion which makes it effective in dealing with the cynical, materialistic and falsely intellectual brigades. It commands a hearing for its views and it expounds its spirituality and idealism without timidity or human respect. We do not find the legionaries ashamed to be seen going to Holy Communion! But I repeat that without the praesidium those same compelling and essential ideas would be submerged by all that cynicism, mockery and materialism which exercise a withering effect on the mediocre Catholic. It goes without saying, however, that the praesidium must be given its chance by leadership and encouragement.

I think that the place without some form of organisation equivalent to the Legion is in peril. For there is no doubt

that the materialistic and evil aspects are gaining ground. If the Legion were to be eliminated at a stroke, I believe that the effect on Ireland would be like the breaking of the dykes which protect low-lying land; that is the oncome of a deluge. In the second place, I contend that the proper working of the Legion would cause good to prevail and would lead on to a Christian order.

Such are the principles of TDN, and there in the praesidium is the machinery to put them into operation. I contend that they must work, because they are based on grace and the love of God. Those simple strivings will be effective where statecraft and governmental power are helpless.

Success of an Experiment

As a crowning evidence of what can be accomplished by the balanced scheme of TDN, I give a case in Ireland where the circumstances of an entire district, 22 miles long, were so uniformly deplorable that it would seem reasonable to call it hopeless. Since the last century it had lost nine tenths of its population and the flow of emigration persisted. No marriage in the preceding five years, and only two children born. With an ageing population, extinction seemed to be certain. Every feature of failure was present; self-help absent; sports non-existent; schools under closing order. Disheartenment was so widespread that it had become the very atmosphere, paralysing energy and good intention.

The Parish Priest declared that it would require a miracle to revive the place, but he added: 'I believe in miracles.' Building on his faith, TDN was set to work in conditions which represented a supreme test for it.

What happened in the next five years forms an epic of all round restoration. I do not term it miraculous

because I would think that, though startling, it is really in the common order, only waiting to be evoked by proper procedure. It is not the will of God that communities be extinguished or languish in misery. A modern sufficiency is available to all who reach out properly for it: neither too much nor too little as the Liturgy petitions. God has pity on the multitude and wants to save it. But human co-operation must enter in: such is his law and he insists on it.

When that self-help animated by faith offers itself, it can effect marvels of restoration. This process need not be a slow one; it can be rapid and such was the case in that territory. In five years a new spirit had declared itself. The place had put itself on the tourist map. Early vegetables were being profitably grown. A knitting industry had been launched. Every aspect of its defect had shown striking amelioration. The revival has taken in all sections of life, the spiritual, the economic, marriages and culture. There is no doubt that it will remain so and do better still, provided of course that the same positive thinking is maintained.

It is probable that this animation (not necessarily of the same kind nor in the same degree) could be accomplished everywhere by the same methods. Obviously too it can be put in motion in every place simultaneously. Then is there not the presumption that any country could be rendered economically sound and otherwise reasonably healthy in a comparatively few years. And it would be a case of true health, because the spiritual and moral considerations would be prominent.

When it comes to choice of schemes, I am not sure but that for us the heart of the matter lies in tourism. Some of you have taken a different view and reckoned that it lies in

the land, in the exploitation of the bounty of nature. So I say that we must not depreciate the one for the other, nor omit the one for the sake of the other. Obviously we must think in terms of everything which affords a possibility; there is no necessary antagonism between the different expedients. Tourism can reach its greatest heights where the land is unsuited to agriculture. As well it asserts itself comprehensively, germinating other industries.

It should be our desire not only to help our own country economically but also to show it forth in an advantageous light. The doing of this latter work must comprise everything from cleanliness to making the most of the scenery and also exhibiting the customs, history and religion. On the economic plane tourism has a particular value for Ireland. Many countries have to import the food which they supply to the tourist. For Ireland it would mean the saving of the costly exportation of its produce, some of it at a loss.

But note: accommodation is the first requirement, scenery taking second place. Therefore the effort should be made to induce householders to cater for a visitor or two. In Scotland this is much developed. One is struck by the prevalence of the sign 'bed and breakfast'. It is essential that the accommodation reach certain qualifying levels. Another aspect is that if people can be induced to take in visitors, it makes them improve their own homes and raise their standards. Moreover, they should be encouraged to do what they never do at present; that is tell the visitors about Catholicism. This the visitors are anxious to hear as lending 'character' to their holiday, but it is denied to them out of a mistaken delicacy, a reluctance to interfere with their beliefs. That could be a costly error from the Catholic point of view. For the amount of appreciation

foreign visitors show when trouble has been taken to explain such things to them is often quite touching. It embellishes their holiday. They go away and talk about how much they have learned. It would be much as if we were visiting India and somebody took the trouble to bring us around the Buddhist temples and explained them to us. But there would be this difference between the two transactions, that God may seize upon the contact at home as a means of bringing Catholicism to the visitor.

I have finished. A gigantic task confronts us far exceeding the greatest human effort and only realisable if the Holy Spirit is with us. But let us only set ourselves to it. The Legion has already been used as the channel of great graces. Perhaps this will be another one because of its very necessity, because it seems to represent a logical outcome of the doctrine of the Mystical Body.

Citizens of Nazareth

Now I give you a paragraph in the new printing of the handbook which deals with this question of True Devotion to the Nation: 'The Legion has a compelling motive for the service of the community. It is that Jesus and Mary were citizens of Nazareth. They loved that town and their country with a religious devotion, for to the Jews faith and fatherland were so divinely intertwined as to be but one. Jesus and Mary lived the common life of their locality with perfection. Every person and thing there was an object of deepest interest to them. It would be impossible to conceive them as indifferent or neglectful in any respect. Today the world is their country and each place is their Nazareth. In a baptised community they are bound more intensely to the people than they were to their own blood kindred. But their love has now to

issue through the Mystical Body. If their members exert themselves in this spirit to serve the place in which they live, Jesus and Mary will move through that place shedding their beneficial influences not only on souls but on the surroundings. There will be material betterment, problems will shrink; nor is true betterment to be gained from any other source. It is this spiritualised service of the community which the Legion has been propounding under the title True Devotion to the Nation.'

Servant of God Frank Duff was born in Dublin on 7 June 1889. His first publication was 'Can we be Saints' in 1916. He founded the Legion of Mary on 7 September 1921. He retired from the Irish Civil Service in 1934 to devote his time to the Legion. He was invited to attend the Second Vatican Council in 1965 as a lay observer. He died on 7 November 1980.

